

INQUIRIES INTO ECONOMIES OF VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

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François-Xavier Plasse-Couture

Dissertation committee

1. Michael J. Shapiro, chairperson
2. Kathy Ferguson
3. Jairus Grove
4. Samson Okoth Opondo
5. Laura Lyons

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the different regimes and economies of violence producing the settler colonial present in Israel/Palestine. That is, by theorizing ‘society’ as the *effect* of warlike relations whereby particular tactics and strategies are employed as a way of organizing and policing forms of life necessary for the continuation of a particular European/Western settler colonial body politic and its actualization in the state-form (statization), this thesis aims at pluralizing the sites of political violence and resistance. It argues that the so-called “Israeli-Palestinian conflict” is in fact the *effect* of Israel’s and European societies’ gendered, racial, and settler colonial politics as the continuation of war by other means. To do so, the thesis explores the culturally specific processes of social identification through various institutions, dispositifs, and practices that allow certain representations of Israeliness and Jewishness in general to become dominant while disqualifying and policing others. More specifically, it examines the intrications between discourses on the Modern Jewish self, racial and colonial histories/rationalities, and Jewish modes of self-writing that emerge together with/against the modes of socialization and production of the “self” and “other(s)”.

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## Dissertation Introduction

*[T]here is a struggle over what is done in the name of the Jewish people and so all the more reason to reclaim that tradition and ethics in favour of a politics that prizes social and political justice above nationalism that depends fundamentally on military violence to sustain itself.<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

*To take [Aimé] Césaire seriously is to keep on hunting down in today's life the signs that point to these returns of colonialism or its reproduction and its repetition in contemporary practices – be it in the form of warring practices, forms of minorization and the stigmatization of differences...<sup>2</sup>*

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write that “Violence is found everywhere, but under different regimes and economies.”<sup>3</sup> Echoing Walter Benjamin’s *Critique of Violence* and Michel Foucault’s expression referring to “the blood that has dried on the codes of law”, the French authors underscore how war (as a particular form of violence) does not end where sovereignty begins.<sup>4</sup> Although the realm of unregulated violence has been associated with the world of international relations, the “outside”, we can find extremely high and recurrent economies of violence “inside”, in the realm of sovereignty. Or, to put it another way, “secondary” or “law-preserving” violence always comes after a form of violence – “primary” or “lawmaking” violence of *étatisation*<sup>5</sup> – that draws the boundaries (law, borders, the *bio* of

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, *Parting Ways*, 117.

<sup>2</sup> Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 229. My own translation.

<sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 425.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin writes: “For if violence, crowned fate, is the origin of law, then it may be readily supposed that where the highest violence, that over life and death, occurs in the legal system, the origins of law jut manifestly and fearsomely into existence.” in “Critique of Violence” in Benjamin, Jephcott, and Demetz, *Reflections*, 286. See also; Derrida, “Force of Law”; Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 56.; J. Protevi does a great job at summerizing and conceptualising the complexity of this theoretical nexus. in Protevi, John, “Economies of Violence.”

<sup>5</sup> The word is D&G’s. Deleuze and Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie, Tome 2*, 578. It is often translated as “statification”. The concept points to the genealogical and historical process by which, the state, as a particular force, becomes dominant within the field of socialization; dominant to the extent that the system of power and violence becomes institutionalized. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 571.



politics).<sup>6</sup> In the colonial and settler colonial contexts, these economies of violence take the form of a “network, ‘nodes of multiple, diverse, and cumulative forms of [sovereign] violence’ [...] giving to life the *allure* of an ‘incomplete death’.”<sup>7</sup> Heeding these authors’ common injunction to (re)think the political, this thesis seeks to problematize (and complexify) the understanding of the Israel/Palestine settler colonial case by drawing on different sites where these “regimes and economies” of violence operate.

By the same token, this thesis is also about modernity and geopolitics; about how modernity alters geopolitics. It aims at historicizing and, by the same token, denaturalizing ‘violent cartographies’ – the “historically developed, socially embedded interpretations of identity and space that constitute the frames within which enmities” are problematized, (re)produced and ultimately naturalized into so-called “clashes of civilizations”.<sup>8</sup> It is about how the legacy of Modernity’s ontological categories and concepts – such as the nation, civilization, Man, race, reason, sovereignty, the state (amongst others) – have and still shape the epistemological frames through which various forms of violence are apprehended and ultimately legitimated through dubious yet powerful moral/ethical claims, or, in opposition, completely ignored.

The site of inquiry or, to be more accurate, of problematization of Modernity’s legacy is the Zionist subject as embodied through the figure of the Israeli sabra and its ethno-national and geopolitical project in Palestine and Israel. What I aim to achieve is an alternative form of problematization for apprehending geopolitical understandings of political violence – of which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one such instance. As such, the project is also a critique of the often too simple biopolitical readings of instances such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that tend to ignore the ontological categories which frame the violence they try to think.

That is, the situation in Israel-Palestine is often presented by these biopolitics theory informed readings as an exceptional state of politics where forms of violence (in its intensity and

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. “Critique of violence” in Benjamin, Jephcott, and Demetz, *Reflections*; See especially Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari*, 60–63.

<sup>7</sup> In quotes are Frantz Fanon’s (from “Why we employ violence”). Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 157, 238. my translation.

<sup>8</sup> Michael J. Shapiro in Opondo and Shapiro, *The New Violent Cartography*, 293.

deployment) take exceptional proportion. Part of the argument I am making in this thesis is that, if one situates it in a larger history of European Modernity and its consequential colonialism, settler colonialism, imperialism, and predatory capitalism, the case of Israel-Palestine does not constitute a particularly exceptional “odd bird”. In other words, the amount of violence that bodies face on a daily basis in Israel-Palestine is without a doubt staggering and sometimes takes exceptional forms. But these forms have nothing exceptional when situated against the background of Modernity’s legacy across the globe, especially when one frames Zionism as a settler colonial / emancipatory nationalist project.<sup>9</sup>

On the contrary, it appears, I argue, as a quite logical outcome of Modernity’s ontological and epistemological categories, tropes, paradigms of “civilizing teleologies, Orientalism, xenophobia, militarism, border anxieties,”<sup>10</sup> still haunting us today. Many readings of the Israel/Palestine case fail to “*problematize* the object of their analysis; instead of addressing critically the way in which the postcolonial state reproduced and reinforced colonially produced political identities in the name of justice, they ended up once again treating these identities as if they were natural constructs.”<sup>11</sup> Could it be that victims so often become killers because we have over and over failed to think the relationship between violence, identity, bodies, and life itself without the ‘universals’ that Modernity seems to be imposing on our way of being in this world? How is possible that so many emancipatory national projects from Zionism, to the various Maoist instantiation (Mao’s Revolution, the Khmer Rouge, amongst others), and other nativist projects (of which, Rwanda is the most glaring instantiation, but far from being the exception) end up in a blood bath as large and deep as the one left by the colonizers themselves?

As such, this project is thus not just another genealogy of “Zionism is racism 2.0”. As we shall see below, this project involves a (very, very) short genealogy of a dominant identity figure

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<sup>9</sup> As Brad Evans and Laura Guillaume write, “there is a potential danger for a politics of resistance or criticism in focusing exclusively on these dramatic examples of sovereign rule. This has the potential to conceal the ‘normalised’ ways in which power operates, through the juridical policing of humanity, through the production and organisation of life, through the regulation of flow and exchange in accordance with the predicates of the economising facets of global Liberal rule.” Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War.”

<sup>10</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 204.

<sup>11</sup> Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, XIII.

of Zionism and contemporary Israel – the Sabra – and the latter does point to the various forms of eugenic and racist discourse enacted and mobilized to secure this proselyte identitarian national project. However it is not *just* a genealogy of racism, it is a genealogy of Modernity’s own political, ethical, moral and philosophical answer to its own violence it sought to expulse, and eliminate. In Judith Butler’s words, this thesis aims “to challenge those regimes that require assimilation to their own norms.”<sup>12</sup> If I take the case of Israel so seriously, it is precisely to offer a “de-exceptionalization” of its violence and identitarian dynamics – showing that, as I already stated, they are the quite logical outcome of our own failures to move beyond recognition, or – to put it in Deleuze’s terms – *to think*.<sup>13</sup>

In this context then, when it comes to the theory and fashionable cases taken up by various disciplines attentive to issues of political violence in global politics, it should be said that the Israeli case is not an exceptional paradigm: it is *the* paradigm of International Relation, Security Studies, and Terrorism Studies put into action – applied demonology (or teratology).<sup>14</sup> The political and critical effect of this thesis, I hope, is that, yes, it will show that Israel’s violence is quite monstrous (and not only the violence targeting the Palestinians), but so is Europe’s (understood as the now Global Europe), and capitalism’s.

One only need the turn to today’s so-called “refugee crisis”, the integration of migrants, the return of Neo-Nazi parties into executive and legislative institutions (and paramilitaries fulfilling policing and border control functions), the growing number and popularity of U.S. vigilantes on the southern border, ISIL and Taliban’s mujahedeen, the Charles Taylors (Liberia), Jihadi Johns and other entrepreneurs of violence of this world who now dwell on Europe’s and capitalism’s legacy of ‘superfluity’. For Europe, North America and countries of the ‘global south’ such as Brazil and India, Israel is not an exceptional case of violence. It is in fact quite the opposite, an exceptional case in the pacification of the superfluous bodies.<sup>15</sup> To the point where Israel is now

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<sup>12</sup> Butler, *Parting Ways*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> After all, such is, in part, the condition of “the banality of evil”. Cf. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

<sup>14</sup> On security studies and terrorism studies as demonology see Li, “A Jihadism Anti-Primer.”

<sup>15</sup> As Judith Butler writes, “This way of differentiating between valuable and nonvaluable populations emerges not simply in the aftermath of violent conflicts, but provides the

a model being exported for other local designs, with the increasing miscegenation of police and military forces into national and international security (and terrorist) assemblages. It is thus in this sense that this thesis is, yes, mostly about Israel, but also mostly about how (post)modernity alters and shapes geopolitics today. To put it differently, although deeply genealogical, this thesis is about the politics of our contemporary moment, and our philosophical moment for that matter: “a critical ontology of ourselves” and the present.<sup>16</sup>

## **Subjectivity, Violence, Modernity: A Theoretical Framework**

As this thesis is mostly interested in how Modernity’s premises were adopted and reproduced by the European Jews and transmuted into shaping Reform Judaism and ultimately Zionism statehood project, it requires at least in some brief form, a “theory” of subjectivity. This thesis is most importantly inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s philosophical and critical thought. Their thought and writings are what holds this thesis’ chapters together, although each of them engages other philosophical thinkers (Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, Achille Mbembe, Georges Bataille, Jasbir Puar, Alexander Weheliye to name the most important). The reason for adopting Deleuze’s particular reading is that it allows, I believe, to avoid most of the pitfalls of the psychoanalytical understandings of subjectivity, which remain until today, the most influential framework in postcolonial, critical security, and global studies.

To make a (very) long story short, in the psychoanalytical framework, the subject’s ontological reality is that of a *lack*. The subject lacks unity or any other basis upon which it can rest securely so as to form a stable identity. The desire to fulfill this lack is what drives political projects or movements such as nationalism, colonialism, and racism. It is also this lack, or absence of foundation, which, it is said, can bring a radically new kind of ethics and politics. Here humanism is pushed to its limit, but we are nevertheless in presence of a “structure” of the human, or the subject. Moreover, in this Lacan-inspired framework, repression – of the Oedipal desire – is central, and desire is circumscribed to the realm of sexuality. The problem then becomes one of *interpretation* or *recognition* (extrapolation of the oedipal structure).

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epistemological condition of the conflict itself.” in Butler, *Parting Ways*, 21.; On Israel as the model for “pacification” as the new object of security see Halper, *War Against the People*.

<sup>16</sup> “What is Enlightenment?” in Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, 32–50.

In Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of desire, contra Lacan, there really is neither lack nor any law, hence, neither ideology nor repression.<sup>17</sup> Here desire should be instead understood as a process of experimentation.<sup>18</sup> Where Lacan found in desire-as-lack the *structure* (or genesis) for subjectivity, Deleuze associates desire with *process*, affect, and hence, subjectivity, if we still want to hold to the concept, "is epiphenomenal to creative action"<sup>19</sup>, a *becoming*. It is an event, a "haecceity (individuality of a day, a season, a life)"<sup>20</sup>. Here desire takes more of a positive stance, as well as being productive. In line with Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, I believe that the question is thus not so much about *a lack* as it is about active/reactive and forces/desires (hence my turn to the concept of War Machine below).<sup>21</sup> In other words, political struggles (as events) may produce new subjectivities that are not reducible to existing structures (be it lack or anything else).<sup>22</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari speak of "desiring-production" and "desiring-assemblage" (*agencement de désir*). For subjects are always mixtures of various desires, of various social forces that assemble and move through bodies, pushing them to make new connections, taking new posture, new circuits of exchange circulating affects, making new feelings perceptible, allowing new experiences to e

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<sup>17</sup> Deleuze, "Désir et Plaisir | Multitudes," sec. E.

<sup>18</sup> Parr, Adrian., *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Shapiro, *Politics and Time: Documenting the Event*, chap. "Keeping Time: The Rhythms of Labor and the arts of resistance."

<sup>20</sup> Translated from "Pour moi, désir ne comporte aucun manque ; ce n'est pas non plus une donnée naturelle ; il ne fait qu'un avec un agencement d'hétérogènes qui fonctionne ; il est processus, contrairement à structure ou genèse ; il est affect, contrairement à sentiment ; il est « haecceité » (individualité d'une journée, d'une saison, d'une vie), contrairement à subjectivité ; il est événement, contrairement à chose ou personne." in Deleuze, "Désir et Plaisir | Multitudes," sec. G.

<sup>21</sup> Note also the affinity between Georges Bataille's thought and this philosophical stence. Bataille, *The Accursed Share, Vols. 2 and 3*, 366–367. Hence, my turn to Bataille in Chapter 3 of this thesis. .

<sup>22</sup> As one commentator of Deleuze's work writes, "It is a singularly statitized thought (pensée étatisée) that looks for the lack everytime and assigns privations everywhere." Guillaume. Sibertin-Blanc, *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari*, 42. My own translation.

merge. Here we can understand the concept of “assemblage as the imbrication of the social and the somatic.”<sup>23</sup> As Michael J. Shapiro recently wrote, “Prior to life as an achievement of social *recognition* [...] is life as desire. [Our] communities of sense [...] must operate without a transcendental basis [and we] enter the encounter as bodies ([we] are not merely arguing; [we] are working in different rooms of the ‘factory’ of desire).”<sup>24</sup> In that sense, desire is neither “natural” nor “spontaneous”, it comes from the social field.<sup>25</sup> But it does not come from the fantasy of a lack that would be externally induced neither – “it is first and foremost the psychical and corporeal production of what we want”.<sup>26</sup>

In the context of modernity’s colonial and postcolonial legacies, and the current ongoing settler colonialism project in Israel/Palestine, the importance of the concept of desire is striking. This is so because colonization was and still is a “prodigious phantasm and desire producing machine [...] putting into circulation material goods, symbolic resources [...] acting as operators of differentiation (of prestige, status, hierarchy, and class).”<sup>27</sup> On this account, Zionist and Reformist European Jews were no exception to other colonized societies: “the subjection of the Negroes [and Jews] to desire; the fact that they let themselves be fooled and seduced by that ‘large twine of the imaginary machinery’ that made merchandise [...] Negroes [and Jews] remember the colonial potentate has an original distress and that at the same time they refuse to admit the part of unconscious investments in the colony as a desire production machine.”<sup>28</sup> Put back into this perspective, Zionism is one outcome of a much more broader modern and colonial legacy and dynamic.

Here, Modernity appears as a particular assemblage (*agencement*) putting into play new relations a new mode of (material and social) production (capitalism), with new modes of

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<sup>23</sup> Protevi, “Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March.”

<sup>24</sup> Shapiro, *War Crimes, Atrocity and Justice*, 52.

<sup>25</sup> D. & G. write: “Assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled, desire. The rationality, the efficiency, of an assemblage does not exist without the passions the assemblage brings into play, without the desires that constitute it as much as it constitutes them.” in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 399.

<sup>26</sup> Eugene Holland in Parr, Adrian., *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, 68.

<sup>27</sup> My translation from Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 168.

<sup>28</sup> My own translation from *ibid.*, 177.

transportation (the slave ship for instance) and newly encountered people (colonial encounters), and etc. Assemblages are, for Deleuze and Guattari, “emergent functional structures that conserve the heterogeneity of their components.”<sup>29</sup> Modernity is thus a “historically assignable” assemblage where desire circulated, making one with it, being its “co-functioning”.<sup>30</sup> And since it is desire that assembles and makes the social field function, power dispositifs are at one and same time produced by these desiring-assemblage.<sup>31</sup> The problem becomes one of *creation*, of *invention*.<sup>32</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *affect*, “which refers to the ability of bodies to form assemblages with other bodies,”<sup>33</sup> or the “becomings or capacities to produce emergent effects in entering assemblages,”<sup>34</sup> becomes central for that matter. Indeed, when it comes to creation, it all depends of the affects and affections of a particular body. As Protevi explains, “affect is physiological, psychological, and machinic: it imbricates the social and the somatic in forming a ‘body politic’ which feels its power or potential to act increasing or decreasing as it encounters other bodies politic and forms assemblages with them (or indeed fails to do so).”<sup>35</sup> It is thus inherently political for bodies are constitutive parts of an “eco-social matrix of other bodies” affecting one another.<sup>36</sup>

Deleuze identifies two axes where one can situate, amongst the various components of the desire assemblage, various power dispositifs. On the first one are the discursive and non-discursive formations, enunciation and things (coding/decoding). For instance, one may find on this axis the various discourses typical of modernity and Enlightenment about Man, the rights of

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<sup>29</sup> Protevi, “Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March.”

<sup>30</sup> Deleuze, “Désir et Plaisir | Multitudes,” sec. D.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., sec. F.

<sup>32</sup> “We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention. Assemblages may group themselves into extremely vast constellations constituting “cultures,” or even “ages“;” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 406.

<sup>33</sup> Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War.”

<sup>34</sup> Protevi, “Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March.”

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Man, masculinity, Progress, Civilization, and Race amongst others. On the other axis, one may distinguish between movements of (re)territorialization and deterritorialisation which carry away an assemblage, thus bringing change. In the context of modernity, imperialism and colonialism appear as powerful process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation; both driven by the capitalist axiomatic. These processes have carried away the Bourgeois (French Revolution and the birth of the Bourgeois state), the superfluous men (both the excess of laboring population without work in the metropole and the excess of racially defined indigenous colonized population in the colonies), and the Jew (as a new enemy within the Nation) amongst others. Modernity can thus be understood as a “historically variable and determinable desiring assemblage, with its points of deterritorialisation, flux and combination.”<sup>37</sup> An assemblage that produced its own variant of power dispositifs operating a direct and immediate relationship with bodies, imposing particular organisation(s) on them.<sup>38</sup> In turn, new tactics and strategies for resisting power developed, bringing variations through a reciprocal play.

Hence, if one may speak of a subject, he is radically epiphenomenal, appearing and disappearing along the lines of the movements of de/re-territorialization. This subject is an anchor upon which the power dispositif – operating where there is reterritorialisation – may exercise power. Subjects are thus nodal points in a (temporarily) striated space. Power dispositifs are a component of these desire assemblages, but they’re not the ones assembling. Hence, for Deleuze, “power is an affection of desire,” and the latter, as we noted previously, is not a “natural reality”.<sup>39</sup> To put it another way using a concrete example from the second chapter of this thesis where I treat the question of the body, one may say that the various processes of self-stylization of the Jewish body were responses, not so much to a structure which defined subjectivity as a *political* answer to a very political process by which various power dispositifs – amongst which the military institution and the prison, as Foucault showed – shaped bodies and imposed modes of organisation on them, assigning them a new shapes, and new forms of value. A problem Zionist, *miskilim* (proponents of the *Hashkala*), and others had to address.<sup>40</sup> In fact,

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<sup>37</sup> Deleuze, “Désir et Plaisir | Multitudes,” sec. E.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., sec. G.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., sec. D.

<sup>40</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari write “Drives and part-objects are neither stages on the genetic axis nor positions in a deep structure. They are political options in response to problems,



these various strategies varied to a great extent even *within* the Zionist and Reform movement. Hence, to come back to the topic of subjectivity, let us cite Deleuze where he writes that there are no more subjects, but “individuations without subjects, which constitute collective assemblages. [...] Nothing becomes subjective but haecceities take shape according to the compositions of non-subjective powers and effects.”<sup>41</sup> Modernity here thus also appears as one particular desiring-assemblage with its various bio-power dispositif organizing bodies along the capitalism axiomatic, operating re-territorializations of bodies, assembling new forms of masculinities, corporealities, spatialities, desires (“boyhood ideals”<sup>42</sup> is one important here, amongst others), and etc..

In the context of Jewish populations of Europe, its various forms of answers to Euro-Christians’ demands for assimilation or “emancipation” – the Jewish Enlightenment (*Hashkala*), reform Judaism, and Zionism amongst others – here appear not so much as contradictions (against some kind of essence of what it would mean to be Jewish for instance) but as tactics, strategies, lines of flight, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation movements in response to European States’ and nationalists disguised demands for homogenization, acculturation, and conversion – in sum, capture – that can be linked to the universalization of global capitalism time.<sup>43</sup> In the context of modernity – a global process that overwhelmed colonized and

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entrances, and exits, impasses that the child lives politically—that is to say, with the whole force of its desire.” in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 13.

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, 93.; Deleuze (first in *The Logic of Sense*) and Guattari came up with the concept of Body-without-Organ instead of subjectivity. The latter serves the purpose of highlighting the processual character of subjects, or becoming. Yet, has they not, this becoming can never entirely break free from power dispositif. We must exist within the system that bind us while, at the same time, aim for becoming “otherwise other”. Parr, Adrian., *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, 47. For the purpose of this thesis I have chosen to avoid persuing with this concept for purpose of conceptual persimony and clarity.

<sup>42</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1973, 131, 211.

<sup>43</sup> Deleuze writes “une société ne se contredit pas, ou guère. Mais sa réponse, c’est : elle se stratégise, elle stratégise... [...] une société, un champ social ne se contredit pas, mais ce qui est premier, c’est qu’il fuit, il fuit d’abord de partout, ce sont les lignes de fuite qui sont premières [...] Les lignes de fuite sont à peu près la même chose que les mouvements de déterritorialisation : elles n’impliquent aucun retour à la nature, ce sont les pointes de déterritorialisation dans les agencements de désir.” [society does not contradict itself, or hardly. But his response is: it strategises itself, it strategises. [...] a society, a social field does not contradict itself, but what is primary is that it flees, it flees first from all sides [...] The lines of

colonizers alike – these strategies appear as technologies of the self or processes of aesthetization of the self, that allowed individuals and social groups to “find themselves again”, to re-territorialize, to compensate the massive forces of capitalist deterritorialisation.<sup>44</sup> For Deleuze, these lines of flights are precisely where one can locate desire – to the point where it merges with them. The problem here is one of differentiating active from reactive forces (that is the problem of schizoanalysis).

As Daniel Boyarin, Emmanuel Levinas, Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Judith Butler, Jacqueline Rose and my own advisor (amongst others) have underlined, there existed already in modern Europe a number of Jewish practices and modes of beings that challenged modernity’s mainstream phallic locus of national belonging and masculinity.<sup>45</sup> To a certain extent, some of these various European Jewish communities formed a radically different desiring-assemblage and thus, at a time where capitalism became global, represented a form of exteriority that European states needed to capture.<sup>46</sup> As such, although I am no expert in Jewish philosophical thought nor historiography, my intuition is that Jewish exteriorities can be conceptualised – following Deleuze and Guattari – as War Machines.<sup>47</sup> That is, they had, for a quite a significant

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flight are more or less the same thing as the movements of deterritorialisation: they imply no return to nature, they are the points of deterritorialisation in the desiring-assemblages.] in Deleuze, “Désir et Plaisir | Multitudes,” sec. F.

<sup>44</sup> I am translating and paraphrasing from “moyen pour une personne ou un sujet de « s’y retrouver » dans un processus qui la déborde. C’est une re-territorialisation.” in *ibid.*, sec. G.

<sup>45</sup> As Patrick Wolfe notes, “contemporary secular-Jewish responses to antisemitism included non-Zionist, non-colonial perspectives such as those of the socialist Bund - [...] or the ‘conscious pariah’ Bernard Lazare, whose humane Jewish universalism would later be picked up by Arendt and after her, in a companion spirit, by Gabriel Piterberg.” Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 109.; See also Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 1997; Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*; Butler, *Parting Ways*; Rose, *Proust among the Nations*; Rose, *The Question of Zion*; Rose, *The Last Resistance*; Aronowicz, *Nine Talmudic Readings by Emmanuel Levinas*; Theses on the Philosophy of History in Benjamin, *Illuminations*; On Arendt, see Butler’s comment where she identifies her position as close to the one of Benjamin in Butler, *Parting Ways*, 123.

<sup>46</sup> Various discourses on “emancipation” of the Jews can be linked to the need of the (German) state to capture Jewish bodies for purpose of Empire building (either sending them to “sugar Islands” in the Carabean in order to expend empire) or nation building (inside what is no Germany in order to populate unpopulated areas and expend agricultural production) see Hess, “Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary”; Hess, “Sugar Island Jews?”

<sup>47</sup> As they write, “collective bodies always have fringes or minorities that reconstitute equivalents of the war machine—”Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 366.; Moreover,

time resisted to stratification processes and developed various tactics and strategies to deal with various economies of violence. All these processes (*Hashkala*, Reform Judaism, “Court Jews”, and other technologies of the self) point to processes of “capture” but also to the question of “how stratification induces prosocial allegiance to its patterns (its form of desiring production)”, or how did European Jews come to desire their own nation-state, part of the world (read “European”) of nations and progress?<sup>48</sup> This is, as John Protevi calls it, the “Spinoza question”. To put it another way, why did Zionists adopt the anti-Semitic modern European hierarchy when they were certainly not at the top?<sup>49</sup>

The concept of the War Machine is particularly useful when it comes to conceptualizing forms of violence (or other movements for that matter) that exceed sovereign or State logic. Where many political analysts will see “meaningless” violence beyond affective economies of enmity/amity – for instance, in the recent exactions of the so-called *Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant* (ISIL) – the concept becomes a tool to (re)politicize these forms of violence.<sup>50</sup> It is also a powerful tool to demystify and re-historicize the various forces and movements that lead to the establishment of a particular state order (and its original foundational violence).<sup>51</sup> Finally, it becomes a particularly powerful tool when one seeks to think about complex relations between

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if we heed the Israeli historian Shlomo Sand's assertion that the Jewish religion spread by conversion that was brought by nomadic people, the comparison or analogy with D&G's war machine becomes even more apposite. See Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*; Judith Butler argues that “Jewishness can and must be understood as an anti-identitarian project”, hence, it could constitute a war machine in that sense as well. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 117.

<sup>48</sup> Protevi, John, “Economies of Violence,” 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>50</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*, xiv.

<sup>51</sup> As Evans and Guillaume note, with the concept of the “war machine it then at once became possible to offer an alternative reading of the history of state power which, exposing the war like origin of all modern forms of civic ordering, posed uncomfortable questions for those grounded in the peaceful sermons of conventional political orthodoxy. For the history of State politics becomes the continuation of war by other means. The history of state power is fractured and multiplied if we consider the ways in which military force and warrior logic operates at the level of the unfolding of social relations rather than simply from the perspective of sovereign statehood” in Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War.”

state and non-state forces, and especially in instances where war and dangerous forms of labor become resonant with one another.<sup>52</sup> Sibertin-Blanc summarizes explains that

The war machine “designates a relationship of *exteriority in relation to the State organisation of a given society* in social formations that can be quite diverse in structure and objective (band, secret society, religious brotherhood, professional association, commercial organisation, etc.) as in the components they arrange (technical, scientific, artistic, linguistic, ecological, economic, religious, etc.). A given group forms a war machine not when it takes war as its goal, but when it becomes heterogeneous to the state apparatuses, to their procedures of administration and of control over the social field, as well as to their particular modes of territorialization, in other words, to the reciprocal determination of the State’s power and of the specific spatiotemporal formations in which it actualises itself.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, the War Machine is a way to name processes of social formation and organization that are at once exterior to the State and resonant with it. In short, social forces that escape state institutions constitute the War Machine. The relationship between the state and the War Machine should thus not be thought in terms of independence from one another, but in terms of coexistence as a “perpetual field of interaction”<sup>54</sup>.

Here the state appears as an apparatus that *captures* flows of bodies and population, capital, and production.<sup>55</sup> Before being a particular historical formation, the state is before all a condition, a “hierarchical mode of organizing power that appears as a tendency or impulse through history.”<sup>56</sup> While the war machine’s objective is to smoothen the striated space of the state, the state for its part aims at capturing the war machine by giving it definite coordinates on its striated space and controlling its speed:

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<sup>52</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*, xi.; Achilles Mbembe writes, following D & G, that “War machines are made up of segments of armed men that split up or merge with one another depending on the tasks to be carried out and the circumstances. Polymorphous and diffuse organizations, war machines are characterized by their capacity for metamorphosis.” Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 32.

<sup>53</sup> Sibertin-Blanc and Richter, “The War Machine, the Formula and the Hypothesis.”

<sup>54</sup> My translation from “un champs perpétuel d’interaction” in Deleuze and Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Tome 2, 446.

<sup>55</sup> Following D & G, Sibertin-Blanc identifies three modes or tools of state capture: “the management of territory and the control of norms of residency and of the circulation of men and of things; the organisation of work and the control of norms of exploitation of surplus labor; the tax system and control of the issuing of money.” in Sibertin-Blanc and Richter, “The War Machine, the Formula and the Hypothesis.”

<sup>56</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*, 7.

The State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc. There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects.<sup>57</sup>

As Sibertin-Blanc further explains,

to ‘smoothen’ space does not mean to homogenize it, but to put into variation the stable landmarks that would permit the imposition of modes of occupation of space upon invariables. [...] The State, [...], needs such invariable fixed points (striations) in order to immobilize space, in order to identify and control human beings and things according to their positions and their movements in this space, but also to delimit it, segment it, and render it appropriable either directly (when the State itself determines the rules of residence) or indirectly (when it fixes the juridical rules of its private appropriation).<sup>58</sup>

The state appears in large part reliant on the war machine for introducing productive change where *stasis* and reactivity has lead to inefficiency and unproductivity. On their part, war machines may very well colonize the state for their own purpose or logic, instrumentalizing the state to obtain access to transnational networks, resources, and workforce. Consequently, war machine are a form of experimental technology that “produce violence, masculinity, political subjectivity, and exploitative economic relations in novel configuration [... thus producing] unexpected political and social possibilities” in the context of a metamorphosing global capitalist axiomatic.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, as Deleuze and Guattari note, “*The State has no war machine of its own; it can only appropriate one in the form of a military institution, one that will continually cause it problems.*”<sup>60</sup> For instance, one state may rely on groups of mercenaries or young men and women ready to sell their workforce to achieve the state’s desired objective. Once the state has achieved its political ends through violence (war), the war machine may institutionalizes war within society and peace may very well becomes equally violent as war. This is what the experiences of the Weimar Republic, Sierra Leone and Liberia during and even after the Mano River War, post-2003 Iraq for instance, or today’s Syria or Yemen. Hence, in essence, the state is

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<sup>57</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 385–386.

<sup>58</sup> Sibertin-Blanc and Richter, “The War Machine, the Formula and the Hypothesis.”

<sup>59</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*, xi.

<sup>60</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 355.

a reactive force that thinks according to already well-established principles and dogmas.<sup>61</sup> For instance, the concept of “race” here in this thesis definitely belongs to state, as it seeks to categorize bodies in particular slots. Indeed, for the nascent modern European nation-states, Jews posed a particular problem for striation and here Zionism can be understood as a reactive movement aiming at the reterritorialisation of Jews within the locus of modernity. A War Machine never lasts, it is always captured, reterritorialized: Zionism ossified in a new State form. Hence, States (re)territorialize the nomadic characteristic of the war machine, but always at the price of revolutionizing the social mode of production. It is this process that brings changes and creativity that is of political significance for our contemporary present.

And it is this processes of capture, flight, and metamorphosis<sup>62</sup> that interest me in this thesis. By investigating the various processes of capture we can appreciate the mutations (change) that the integration of the War Machine brings to the state form, introducing new contradictions and antagonism into its dispositif.<sup>63</sup> In other words, studying the genealogy of violence/capture of European Jewish bodies and the stratification process that lead to contemporary situation in Israel/Palestine is also a way of performing a “critical ontology of ourselves” and the present. A contemporary present in which Israel now embodies the ideal of many states and private enterprises alike.

In turn, while the state may capture the War Machine, “each time there is an operation against the State, Deleuze and Guattari write, - insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act – it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space

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<sup>61</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*, 8.

<sup>62</sup> a “power of metamorphosis” write Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 437.

<sup>63</sup> The process by which the war machine is captured by the state is not itself military, because the military is the outcome of this process. Rather, it is territorial and relates to the circulation of men and things within the state. In the current system, the state has lost control of the war machine, and thus the war machine no longer has war as its object, as this would have to be given by the state. Rather, it is through the political economy, and the interstices of society themselves, that the war machine operates, manifesting itself as a global security order rather than an exceptional moment of war.” Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War.”

as though it were smooth.”<sup>64</sup> What follows is thus escape, lines of flight, or the take over of the State by the war machine to the point where the reason of state becomes the reason of the war machine. This thesis is thus also about what happens when European modern governmentality seeks to leverage these forces, these war machines and desires.

## **Methodology: or the Intuition of Doing Away with Method**

*there is no possible method, no conceivable reproduction...*<sup>65</sup>

*But truth is that it is, in philosophy and even elsewhere, about finding the problem and therefore to put it down, even more than solve it.*<sup>66</sup>

Beyond the conceptual explanations and caveats of this now closing introductory chapter, the reader will not find in this thesis a particular ‘method’. Rather, inspired by the writings of my advisor, Michael J. Shapiro, this thesis adopts ‘assemblage’ oriented practice which, instead of being guided by disciplinary forms of problematization, is more characterized by what he – following Jacques Rancière – calls indisciplinary.<sup>67</sup> Here, my dissertation inter-articulates historical and aesthetic tropes in order to develop a way of constructing the problem of the political as a frame for analyzing the case of Israel/Palestine.

As such, the reader will quickly notice the lack of “disciplinary boundaries”. That is not to say that my thesis does not speak to any discipline, on the contrary. It means that my intuitions and ethical concerns have guided my writing, instead of the wish to position it strategically in fashionable and trendy forms of problematization and engagement: “placing the variables themselves in a state of continuous variation.”<sup>68</sup> Hence, my concern is less to find answers to problems set by social science disciplines and the state institutions (funding, grants processes, etc.) that tend to reward “applicable” or “policy oriented” research, and more about, as Deleuze

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<sup>64</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 386.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 468.

<sup>66</sup> Eli During in During and Bergson, “Trois lettres « inédites » de Henri Bergson à Gilles Deleuze,” 405. my own translation.

<sup>67</sup> Schouten and Shapiro, “Theory Talk #36: Michael J. Shapiro on Pictures, Paintings, Power and the Political Philosophy of International Relations.”

<sup>68</sup> “hydraulic model” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 369.

and Guattari suggest, calling for new forms a problematization.<sup>69</sup> As such, then, if the readers finish reading this thesis with more questions than answers, this project will have fulfilled its critical objective.

Although this is in no way a ‘method’ – in fact, an anti-method<sup>70</sup>, “antiscience” – my approach is a genealogical and an aesthetic one. In his introduction to Foucault’s lecture at the *Collège de France* entitled *Society Must Be Defended*, Arnold I. Davidson comments on Deleuze’s reading of Foucault:

In an exceptional essay on Foucault, Gilles Deleuze has distinguished two dimensions of Foucault’s writings: on the one hand, the lines of history, the archive, Foucault’s analytic; on the other, the lines of the present, of what is happening now, Foucault’s diagnostic: “In every apparatus, we have to disentangle the lines of the recent past and those of the future at hand”.<sup>71</sup>

In terms of my own dissertation, I see it proceeding with the same general idea here above explained concerning the double movement of the historical-genealogical (the analytic) and of the aesthetic (the diagnostic). Let me explain what these two concepts mean for the present thesis.

### ***Foucault and Genealogy***

As Michel Foucault puts it, Kant’s “bold move” was to ask “what it is that one can know”<sup>72</sup>, and we could add that what we can know is determined historically, but also aesthetically. Here Foucault identifies three important features of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries mode of thought<sup>73</sup>: (a) Scientific positivism, (b) development of state system which justify itself as the reason and deep rationality of history, (this is underscored in Hegel’s philosophy for instance) and (c) the wedding of the two into a science of the state. Deleuze and Guattari critique of “royal science” articulate a very similar critique of method as policing device that seeks to master the production

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<sup>69</sup> “There are itinerant, ambulant sciences that consist in following a flow in a vectorial field across which singularities are scattered like so many ‘accidents’ (problems). [...] the ambulant sciences confine themselves to inventing problems” *ibid.*, 372, 374.

<sup>70</sup> Shiner, “Reading Foucault.”

<sup>71</sup> Arnold I. Davidson in Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, xvi.

<sup>72</sup> Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.



of discourse “powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality.”<sup>74</sup>

So the first movement, which is historical, is to “desubjectify the philosophical question by historical content.”<sup>75</sup> That is, it is the task of archaeology to analyse the local discursivities, map their regularity and distribution during a given strata that can be determined empirically. Foucault tells us that there is actually very little that is said during such historical period. So much more could have had been said, yet, we keep hearing and reading the same utterances. Chapter one of this thesis is largely inspired by such movement, showing how very little was actually said by Zionist and Reformists that had not been said before. It points to a failure of creation, or a creation that was a repetition, with its own variations. From the standpoint of Jewish ethics, theology, and philosophical thought, Zionists and other defenders of European Jews’ “emancipation” did not bring much to the conversation.

However, archaeology cannot answer how a particular agencement came to be and how adjustments were brought over time. How these discourses or forms of knowledges mutually penetrate each other and how they are concretized in a variable manner in each concrete case?<sup>76</sup> This means posing the question of this agencement, adjustment and penetration as a concrete event in itself. An event that is the result of forces ordering this particular form over a infinite number of possibilities. This is the question of the event. To pose the question of *evenementalisation*,<sup>77</sup> thus means, in a first time, taking groups of elements where connections between concrete mechanisms of domination, coercion, abandonment and even killing (in the context that interest us here) and content knowledge can be identified (this is the archeological part).

Yet, one must also recover the singularities in this event. Here we need to dig deeper into history. If we want to expose the singular, arbitrary and ordering character of the present, we need to expose the blood that has dried on the law codes, to paraphrase Foucault. That is, we

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<sup>74</sup> Foucault, “Orders of Discourse,” 8.

<sup>75</sup> Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 56.

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 2004, 41.

<sup>77</sup> Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 59.

need tease out the “conditions of acceptability of a system and follow the breaking points which indicate its emergence, to recover pure singularities”<sup>78</sup> (singularity of the discourse on Jewishness during the Enlightenment for instance).

Here we tip in the realm of *genealogy*. A genealogy, is an attempt to “restore the conditions for the appearance” – Deleuze will say “the analysis, not in the causal sense, but in the *optical* sense” – “of a singularity born out of multiple determining elements of which it *is not the product, but rather the effect*.”<sup>79</sup> Hence, what we understand today as the Israeli state and its settler and military dispositif is actually the effect of a variety of discourse, of adjustments, assemblages (*agencements*), intertextual historical meetings points which are particular to the Israeli state, making it a singularity in its own right.

Amongst those discourse which make it very particular I argue, are the past colonial experience of European Jews, the Orientalist production of knowledge and Arab subjectivity which lead the European Jews to disregard *Mizrahim* and *Sephardim* cultural past, Arabic language, and other various traditions which are then linked to the Palestinian (as the Other) upon which the policing of Jewish subjectivity (read the expulsion of the Arabic character of the *Mizrahim* and *Sephardim*) is achieved through various institutions and practices, of which war, securitization and militarization are only one part of a vast dispositif of cultural governance.<sup>80</sup> Discourses on subjectivity which have been the subject of a long and complex “historical battle”<sup>81</sup> and which are until today still extremely contentious, and maybe, one of the reason why the conflict still lingers, more than 60 years after the creation of Israel. In other words, we could say that the silent war that this thesis is theorizing is the dispersion of the policing of Jewish-ness and Israeli-ness in Israel civil society (and the Jewish diaspora increasingly).

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 64 my emphasis.

<sup>80</sup> On the role of War and Foreign Policy as a tool of cultural governance for policing identity, see Campbell, *Writing Security*; On the concept of cultural governance, see the work of Michael Shapiro, especially Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Rose, *The Question of Zion*; Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken*; Butler, *Parting Ways*.

Genealogy thus surface as an “antiscience”, for it helps us retrieve various forms of minor knowledges, which have been buried by the positivistic and utilitarian episteme identified by Foucault. In the face of regimes of power/knowledge and identity/difference, Foucault’s genealogical approach to historical experience takes the form of a “critical attitude”, an ethos which, as Michael J. Shapiro recently pointed out, “[r]ather than merely serving particular segments or disempowered groups, such attitude is designed to ‘understand the present’ in terms of its difference with today ‘with respect to yesterday’. In this respect, the constituencies that critical inquiries are designed to serve are all inclusive.”<sup>82</sup>

One of the reasons for turning to this approach is an ethical commitment. Indeed, Foucault shared a critical attitude, an ethos that pointed to the “joy of wanting to destroy whatever mutilates life.”<sup>83</sup> Foucault’s genealogical axis aimed at achieving “a critical ontology of ourselves” is, in that sense, fundamentally ethical. We could say that the development of this ethos constitutes the arch enemy of the governmentalization of life (moral codes of the state, religious, etc.), which is bound to police and mutilate it; it is the constant reflection on “how *not* to be governed like that”<sup>84</sup>, an “art of not being governed quite so much”<sup>85</sup>. We can thus see here, how genealogy approaches the realm of the ethico-aesthetics. For this critical attitude does not emanates from any moral code, but from a perpetual battle with oneself, to not let oneself settle into the securing comfort of stable knowledge, categories, disciplines, or universal truths but also trades the pre-Kantian impetus towards “discovery” for a reflexive and creative one.<sup>86</sup>

During the writing of this thesis I also visited Israel, luckily during a lull in-between two waves of violence – the first being the Gaza War of summer 2014 and the second a radical increase in communal violence in-between settlers and residents of the West Bank, but also in-between Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. Would my departure had been planned for few weeks earlier, I probably would have never gone. And even as the decision

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<sup>82</sup> Shapiro, *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method*, 8.

<sup>83</sup> My translation from “la joie de vouloir détruire ce qui mutile la vie” in Deleuze, *Foucault*, 2004, 31.

<sup>84</sup> Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 44.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>86</sup> On Foucault ethics and aesthetics, see Bennett, ““How Is It, Then, That We Still Remain Barbarians?””

was taken to go, seeing a “return to the quiet” (as Israeli politicians euphemistically like to say), my wife and family remained anxious and fearful (we had a 11 months old daughter and were expecting our second a few months later). No doubt, these considerations weighted a lot on my travel experience – which I am purposefully *not* calling a “fieldwork”, as it was precisely this: a travel experience. During these three weeks, I have visited and walked through Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Beersheva, the West Bank and the settlement-like small hilltop town of Atsom Segev where I shared the Kippur meal with a family met upon my arrival there. I have participated in organized tours and activities with *Combatants for Peace* and *Machsom Watch*, picking olives with Palestinians and Israelis hoping that settlers would not show up. Every night spent in Israel, I slept on couches of friends met through *CouchSurfing*. I have met multiple scholars and activists who all shared their own perceptions and experiences, amongst them, Neve Gordon, Galia Golan, Nitza Berkovich, Jeff Halper, Regev Nathansohn, Yaniv Belhassen, and Brandon Friedman amongst others. I have also met with Palestinians who, through various peaceful means, resist the occupation and its daily violence. Amongst them, I especially think of friends I have made during my visit in Battir. I am greatly indebted to all of them.

Obviously, three weeks is not enough. When does it become enough for one to avoid the moralizing and epistemological terrorizing and policing of those who preach for the metaphysics of presence? Why would reading a book, a novel, a poem, sharing waves, meals, and beers, or a week in the same apartment not be equally valid experiences? Nevertheless, my visit to Israel/Palestine was immensely enriching.

By mixing these various experiences – this thesis aims not so much at digging up new “facts” (a word Israeli politicians and social scientists do use quite a bit). Instead, “it is an attempt, as Mahmood Mamdani writes, to rethink existing facts in light of rethought contexts, thereby to illuminate old facts and core realities in a new light.”<sup>87</sup> It is an attempts to make the Israeli-Palestinian conflict thinkable beyond the disciplinary constraints and conversely, to ask what can this particular reframing tell us about our own modernity-informed political philosophy and concepts.

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<sup>87</sup> Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, XIV.

## Chapters Outline

*The desire to release life from a guilt secured through legal contract with the state – this would be a desire that gives rise to a violence against violence, one that seeks to release life from a death contract with the law, a death of the living soul by hardening force of guilt. [...] Divine violence does not strike at the body or the organic life of the individual, but at the subject who is formed by law.<sup>88</sup>*

In chapter one, “From European Estrangement to Settleriness: Zionist War Machine and State Capture,” I trace a (too) short genealogy of the Sabra, the dominant mainstream identity in contemporary Israel. The genealogy departs from Europe’s Enlightenment and Jewish European Enlightenment movement (*Hashkala*) and traces the development of the particular figure of the Sabra all the way to contemporary Israel. As such, this chapter is also a genealogy of how the state form appropriates the war machine, or how modernity captured and re-territorialized Jewish thought/identity when, during many centuries, European Jewish population had managed to escape capture (which is not to say that they were not subject of particular harsh forms of political violence). In sum, it is a genealogy of how a particular desiring-assemblage and desiring production (modernity and capitalism) managed to capture bodies and their mode of being in the world that until then, other assemblage (feudalism, etc.) had not, or had done relatively and partially.

This first chapter is particularly long, for it also serves the function of a literature review. Indeed, in light of this first chapter, we are in better position to grasp how certain subjects who were the target of colonialism (intra European) became themselves colonizers, and eventually settler colonists; how victims became killers.<sup>89</sup> As such, one of the political and critical effects of this chapter is to close the gap between the so-called postcolonial reality of the periphery and the liminal social groups living in Europe. Put differently, it brings back colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and modernity at the heart of Europe.

The second chapter, “The Jewish Body and Modernity’s Phallus,” shifts the attention from the discursive to the embodied. That is, it keeps as the primary site of inquiry the sabra, but it shifts the focus from the sabra *figure* to the sabra *body*. Here the body of the Jew appears as

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<sup>88</sup> Butler, *Parting Ways*, 82.

<sup>89</sup> Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*.

another geopolitical vehicle of (settler) colonialism while locating it as the particular assemblage/site upon which various dispositif of bio-power have sought to capture it and turn it into a “modern warrior”. It is about a war machine and its various forms of embodiment, and ultimately its capture by modernity’s state apparatus. In sum, it is about thinking how the state apparatus managed to captures bodies, and ultimately re-territorializes and aligns them with its capitalist, imperialist, and colonial order. Protevi, following Deleuze and Guattari, appositely points to a “bio-cultural production of bodies” which produce bio-affective states, and thus, new desiring-assemblages. This chapter addresses the production of these bio-effective states and their sedimentation into forms of embodiment.

Jasbir Puar writes that “having argued against biological renditions of scientific racism through discourse, culture, and social constructivism, much poststructuralist thought has left waylaid questions of the biological matter of the body.”<sup>90</sup> Heeding her remark, I move to seriously consider bodily matters. The role of the phallus in articulating the Sabra warrior and masculine body is of particular interest here, and especially how the weapon (prosthetic phallus?) becomes part of this particular assemblage of body parts that assemble into this specific sabra body. While chapter one articulates a rehistoricization of a particular geopolitical imaginary through the figure of the sabra, this chapter attends to the “history of bodily experience”, for, as Protevi argues (following Deleuze), “the affective cognition profile of bodies politic is embodied and historical.”<sup>91</sup> Historicizing bodies and body assemblages is crucial to problematize and understand Israel-Palestine today.

These two first chapters form the first part of this thesis, which maps processes of *capture*. They articulate a genealogical reading of how the state *appropriates* war machines. In the second part of this thesis, also composed of two chapters, I map instances whereby the logic of the war machine comes to escape the state so as to produce new effects, new assemblages, affects, desires. In this second part, I push the reading of the war machine towards events during which it tends to exceed (the excess not captured by states) the state logic. It engages instances when the war machine comes back to haunt Israel (but the analysis could be extended outside Israel), as

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<sup>90</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 209.

<sup>91</sup> Protevi, “Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March.”

one example of a global trend (war on terror, Islamophobia, and other forms of pathologization of difference). With these two parts combined, the present thesis appears as a genealogy of how war machines get appropriated but never get fully contained and controlled.

Chapter 3, “Warrior Tropes and Pornotropes: War Machines, Desire, and Libidinal Economy of Violence” is the first chapter of this second section. It takes on the intimate relationship between desire and violence by way of focusing on pornotroping, the cross fertilization between sexuality and violence. It investigates instances and the power of transgression, using Bataille’s concept of expenditure and the effect of the escape on the state’s war dispositif, particularly in instances of war. This chapter thus inquires into the relationship between transgression and expenditure on the one hand, and the state warring dispositif on the other. In this chapter I turn to visual aesthetics – t-shirt designs, billboard, social media image such as “selfies”- in order to think how desire, war, and affects are mediated and intertwined.

Finally, Chapter 4 turns to the contemporary effects of the neoliberalization of the world economy on state-society relationships by inquiring on the “economy of violence” in Israel/Palestine. As violence itself becomes an exchangeable commodity of its own, various groups and individuals of the society – such as settlers in this case – increasingly invest in violent means for achieving their economic, social, and political objectives. On its part, the state also jumps on this economy of violence and may be tempted to ‘outsource’ violence that is politically damaging (the term employed by Israeli officials is “diplomatic fallout”) to these various societal groups interested in exploiting and investing in violence. Processes of securitization of a biopolitically defined life (body politic) guarantees that the settlers benefit from state resources and protection. However, when the state hinders settlers (or other societal groups investing in violence) from exploiting violent means, these groups may very well turn against the state. This is the moment when the War Machine escapes the state and produces, in the context of neoliberalism, forms of violence that are not (entirely) state managed, giving rise to new forms of organization and new economies where one can invest and develop its creative relationship to violence.

## Chapter 1: From European Estrangement to Settleriness: A Brief Genealogy of the Sabra

*The unfortunate response of Zionism to the trauma of the Shoah is that it replicates the very forms of being that sustain the modern European state's incapacity to accommodate life for too long.*<sup>92</sup>

### Introduction

*[Israelis] still live in a modern and prosperous villa in the middle of the jungle, ...*<sup>93</sup>

I would like to open this chapter with what has appeared to many as an anecdotal episode in the history of Zionism (and contemporary Israel). In 1903, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, in what came to be known as the “Uganda Proposal”, made to the head of the World Zionist Organization, Theodor Herzl, an offer he could not turn down: the establishment of a Jewish colony in the East Africa Protectorate. Herzl presented the Proposal to the 6<sup>th</sup> World Zionist Congress the latter turned the proposal down for various reasons. Amongst these the holiness of the land of Palestine and the already considerable effort put into settling British Mandate Palestine were major issues.<sup>94</sup> There is much to learn about the contemporary Israeli and Zionist position articulating both a colonial/colonized and a settler colonial space and subject from this historical insight.

At a minimum, the Proposal came in handy for both men. Herzl, for his part, had failed to secure El-Arish as a potential place to establish a Jewish settlement in the Levant, and needed to present something concrete and tangible to the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> World Zionist Congress. Moreover, humanitarian concerns for East European Jews facing anti-Semitic violence, especially in Russia

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<sup>92</sup> Melissa Levin in Jacobs and Soske, *Apartheid Israel*.

<sup>93</sup> Barak, “Address by Foreign Minister Ehud Barak To the Annual Plenary Session of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.”

<sup>94</sup> In fact, the Proposal became an issue of great concern for early Zionist thinkers and activists and spread discord (and even conflict) in the Zionist movement. Congress participants from Eastern Europe (mainly Russia) felt betrayed and some even accused Herzl of treason. Eventually, the World Zionist Congress's Vice-President, Max Nordau, wrote a letter in the German daily *Die Welt* responding to the East European critiques. Following the publication of this letter, the fight took an orientalist turn – supporters of Herzl accusing Russian Jews of being uneducated easterners missing the faculties to understand the Zionist leadership's plan and the latter presented as the Jewish representatives of a civilized West.



(the Kishinev pogrom happened that year) also motivated Herzl's decision. Chamberlain's administration faced pressure from the Britons not wanting the some 300 000 East European Jews fleeing violence and relocating in large numbers in London's East End. The Uganda Proposal was a strategy to relocate the Jewish migrants and divert future flows.<sup>95</sup> Yet, beyond this alliance for practical purpose between, let us say it, a subtle form of anti-Semitism and the Zionist project, one can identify a common settler colonial ideological ground; both shared, if not the same, at least similar phantasms.<sup>96</sup>

Herzl's phantasms had been exposed to the larger public the year before the formulation of the Uganda Proposal, in 1902, with the publication of his novel *Old New Land (Altneuland)*. Like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, published in its novelistic form the same year and inspired by two centuries of popular novels adopting the imperial *échappatoire* narrative model – from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to H. M. Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent* and *In Darkest Africa* – *Altneuland* shared the same “boyhood ideals”<sup>97</sup>; the same desires and anxieties, the same phantasms. In this narrative model, a young white man who never grew up from his “boyhood nobless” ends up alone in the middle of a never-trodden jungle or a desert island and, while “growing up” and becoming native, brings civilization and enlightenment into an exotic world that was, until his arrival, filled with exoticism, monsters, horror, death, madness; a world

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<sup>95</sup> In a speech delivered in 1904, Chamberlain explained that “the best solution of this question was to find some country in this vast world of ours where these poor exiles can dwell in safety without interfering with the subsistence of others.” As quoted in Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 13; See also Liebner, “Rebirth of the Maccabean”; As Kathy Ferguson notes, heeding Jonathan Boyarin's work, “the creation of the state of Israel was a convenient solution to Europe's ‘Jewish Problem’; it got rid of the Jews without having to examine the state policies in Europe and North America that helped create the crises of Jewry.” Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 451. See also; Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise*, 121.

<sup>96</sup> The view Chamberlain's express here was hardly new. In fact, one of the proponents of the Jewish “emancipation” - a contemporary of Wilhelm Dohm - Johann David Michaelis had proposed long time before Chamberlain that German Jews be deported to a “sugar Island” in the Caribbean where they could settle a new colony and thus expand the King's kingdom overseas. Strangely, like Wilhelm Dohm, he thought that Jews were degenerate who could reform, but unlike Dohm, in order for them to gain rejuvenation, they had to move somewhere south where the climate was in tune with their “Semitic” origins. On this particular topic, see Hess, “Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary”; Hess, “Sugar Island Jews?”

<sup>97</sup> The expression is Arendt's. On boyhood ideals, imperialism, and Zionism, see Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 210–11.

of darkness. These narratives of colonial expeditions fascinated Theodor Herzl himself, and he even mentioned the exodus as an early version of “the present-day scientific exploration of the Witwatersrand gold fields...”<sup>98</sup>

Herzl’s novel narrates two visits that two friends – Kingscourt and Loewenberg – make to Palestine (the first in 1902 and the second in 1923). The years in-between are spent on a desert island in the South Seas (it could have been Uganda as well). Kingscourt is introduced as a tall and muscled German and Loewenberg as a young, frail and effeminate Jewish boy. If the two manage to survive all these years, it is because of Kingscourt (and his manly character and physical attributes) and his “books, apparatus for physics, and weapons”<sup>99</sup> – in sum, civilization. Yet, when they leave the island, Loewenberg, “the green hollow-chested Jewboy” has become “like an Oak” Kingscourt admits.<sup>100</sup> In short, Herzl’s *Altneuland* is about a young Jew being the Friday of a German Crusoe, and his becoming – through *Bildung* – Crusoe himself. This was equally true for Max Nordau, who put it even more clearly: “We intend to come to Palestine as the emissaries of culture and to expand the moral boundaries of Europe to the Euphrates.”<sup>101</sup> As such, colonialism and colonial spaces such as Africa are still “used as an instrument in the constant re-shaping of Zionism, which defines itself as a de-colonized Western territorial project.”<sup>102</sup>

Going back to Herzl’s presentation of the Uganda Proposal at the 6<sup>th</sup> Zionist Congress, one should note that Herzl’s advocacy for the British Proposal came along the reiteration of his Zionists’ commitment to Palestine. Hence, the Uganda settler-colonial enterprise was presented as a stepping-stone to an establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Barely a year had pass since the publication of *Altneuland*, and with Chamberlain’s Proposal, Herzl was being offered the “island in the South Seas where one is really alone”<sup>103</sup>, an imperial expedition for the European Jews and the Dr. Friedrich Loewenbergs of Europe, who like Herzl, had internalized

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<sup>98</sup> Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 5.

<sup>99</sup> Herzl, Theodor., “Altneuland,” bk. IV.

<sup>100</sup> Herzl in *Altneuland*, note 26 as quoted in Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 7.

<sup>101</sup> Max Nordau, *Ketavim tsioniyim*, (collected works, Jerusalem: Hasifriya Hatsionit, 1962), vol.2, 113, as quoted in Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 108.

<sup>102</sup> Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*.

<sup>103</sup> Herzl, Theodor., “Altneuland,” bk. IV.

the European colonial desire and anti-Semite stigma of the Jew as an effeminate, physically inferior, sexually deviant, sick, irrational, if not literally “black”<sup>104</sup> man. By bringing civilization and enlightenment into the heart of darkness, Jews, Herzl hoped, would reform their bodies and character and enter the circle of humanity, thus legitimately claim Palestine as their right. In sum, long before the Holocaust, European Zionists were mobilizing the colonial ‘moral cartography’ that the Europeans would later rely upon to legitimate the worse atrocities from the colonial spaces to, eventually, the heart of Europe itself (Holocaust).<sup>105</sup>

If we fast-forward to the present, the European colonial “images of Africa are still central to Zionism’s self-fashioning.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, the common and still widely shared narrative by Occidental leaders, news networks, and scholars of various fields in the social sciences articulates Israel’s spatial and ethnogenesis as a natural outgrowth of a civilized West in the geographic ‘East’.<sup>107</sup> This narrative depicts Israel as a nation-state finding itself constantly in an *exceptional* situation, a “state under siege”<sup>108</sup>, “entangled in a conflict of unparalleled dimensions” creating a situation of “exceptional vulnerability” that only can be answered by “exceptional security needs”,<sup>109</sup> a “state of exception”.<sup>110</sup>

In contemporary Israel, this Zionist narrative is best summarized by Israel’s former Defense Minister Ehud Barak’s citation quoted in the epigraph above or by the expression describing Israel’s surroundings as a “Middle Eastern muck” (*habotz haMizra-Tichoni*).<sup>111</sup> The oft-cited phrase that “Israel is the sole democracy in the Middle East” summarizes the phenomenon

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<sup>104</sup> On the Jew as a “black” see Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 171–200; See also Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 6–12; On the “black” Jew and process of “whitening” in Israel see Bar-Yosef, “Zionism, Apartheid, Blackface”; On the “black” Jew and the process of whitening in the U.S., see Goldstein, Eric L., *The Price of Whiteness*.

<sup>105</sup> I borrow the concept of “moral geography” to my advisor, Michael J. Shapiro who broadly defined it as “a set of silent ethical assertions that preorganize explicit ethico-political discourses.” in Shapiro, “Moral Geographies and the Ethics of Post-Sovereignty,” 482.

<sup>106</sup> Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 2; See also Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*.

<sup>107</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism”; Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*; Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel.”

<sup>108</sup> Schweller, “Domestic Structure and Preventive War,” 264.

<sup>109</sup> As quoted in Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 7.

<sup>110</sup> Isacoff, “Writing the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” 74–76.

<sup>111</sup> Lustick, “Abandoning the Iron Wall,” 34.

effectively. Written between the lines of these tales is the colonial definition of the Middle East and its indigenous population – and especially the Muslim and Arab populations – as unredeemable threats. Framed as such, the everyday violence of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories and the warring episodes against Israel’s other neighbors (most recently Lebanon) appear as new form of *mission civilisatrice* under the guise of the so-called ‘War on Terror’. In other words, Israel is constantly presented as the reification of the same Western alter ego; a patriarchal, and heteronormative model in a geographical barbarian, sick, emasculated East produced by decades of Euro-Western Orientalism.<sup>112</sup> At a minimum, Israel as a settler colonial regime reproduces the violence rooted in the politics of negation and lack (of masculinity, of humanity, of subjecthood, of rationality, etc.) – a model that, we should remind, was tested upon the Jewish populations of Europe.

The reason why I have turned to this somewhat anecdotal series of events in 1902 and 1903 is that they instantiate almost perfectly the intersectionality of modernity and coloniality within the settler-colonial project that was (is) Zionism. It highlights the centrality of the formation of the European Jewish subject as both a colonized carrying with him/her the stigma of the Enlightenment’s antisemitism and as a colonialist, a becoming “white”. Herzl’s (and Zionism’s) African fantasy aptly highlights the affinity and conviviality “between the colonial desire and the post-colonial guilt.”<sup>113</sup> At this intersection, orientalist tropes, phantasms, and ultimately mimicry (reactive force) play an important role.

This chapter draws a short genealogy of the *sabra*, or the “new-Jew.” To be clear, it does not pretend to map the history of all Israeli or Israeli-Jewish subjectivities. The aim is to highlight the key moments in the construction of the Sabra as ideal- or arche- type.<sup>114</sup> A figure that sets and polices the normative bio/necropolitical threshold that defines which lives are worth governing (‘making live’) and which are deemed expendable, in excess to the *bios* of the body

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<sup>112</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>113</sup> Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 2.

<sup>114</sup> As such, I adopt Yael Zerubavel’s insight that the “ ‘Mythological Sabra’ clearly serves as an *ideal type*, a fictive hegemonic identity that reflects the cultural background, values, and collective aspirations of the European founders” Zerubavel, “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and Jewish Past,” 116; An heritage that still plays a central role in Israeli culture and identity politics. See Sela-Sheffy, “‘What Makes One an Israeli?’”

politic ('let die')<sup>115</sup>. In order to become attentive to the colonial/modern character of Israel's estrangement and the resultant idea of the sabra, I read Hannah Arendt *Origins of Totalitarianism*, a text that provides an elaborate map of the processes that lead to formation of contemporary Jewishness (and the violence attached to it) as well as the macro-political formations that make it possible. Arendt's underlining of the role of capitalism, imperialism and the superfluous men as well as the parts on colonialism in South Africa, Benjamin Disraeli self-fashioning and most importantly, the Dreyfus Affair amongst others are important for theorizing the sabra as both a colonial/colonized *and* a settler colonial subject.

Likewise, Achille Mbembe – also attentive to Arendt's text – most notably through his "African modes of Self-Writing," "Necropolitics", and "Aesthetics of Superfluity," provides a significant pathway to extend Arendt's political and theoretical insights. The first of these texts addresses the Jewish European experience and the various modes of redemption and/or self-fashioning often shared by colonized peoples.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, the already long history of racism, exclusion and violence against various liminal (non-Askenazi) groups within Israel – be they Jews, such as the Sephardim/Mizrahim, or non-Jews, such as the Israeli-Palestinians, the Bedouins, the Thai or Chinese foreign workers, or the Sub-saharan (mostly Eritreans) migrants – make the turn to Mbembe's thought even more appealing. In sum, it is a matter, for me, to put into dialogue Hannah Arendt's understanding of the formation of modern European Jewish subject coupled with Achille Mbembe's critical reading of (de)colonial and redemptive movements, their narratives and their tropes. Finally, Mbembe was certainly not the first to draw a parallel between the Jewish and African redemptive projects. Theodor Herzl himself, the father of Zionism, in his *Altneuland* made the comparison between African and Jewish histories quite explicit – although, as Eitan Bar-Yosef notes, he was careful to position the two at opposite ends of the racial spectrum.<sup>117</sup> In sum, Herzl saw Zionism as an extension of the "the white man's burden". Moreover, Herzl's and other Zionists' racist attitude did not prevent Pan-African activists – from the 1890s onward – to borrow from the Zionist ideology.<sup>118</sup> Western European

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<sup>115</sup> See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 135–39; Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, See also.

<sup>116</sup> Achille Mbembe - drawing on Arendt again - makes the comparison even more explicit elsewhere, in Mbembe, "Faces of Freedom."

<sup>117</sup> Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 10.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 10, (note 38).

Zionists saw their project literally in continuity with the European colonialists and anti-Semites, and they reproduced the same model, taking the responsibility of bringing salvation and enlightenment to the heart of Africa and the Levant.

Reading Arendt and Mbembe together allows me to consider seriously the history, cartography and aesthetics of the Sabra, and thus, allowing to carry out a critique of the coeval emergence of the colonial/colonized and the Settler colonial Jew.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, these texts allow me to highlight the importance of the burden of the metaphysics of difference and its mobilization, making possible certain forms of violence and the moral claims that come to legitimate it. Moreover, turning to these thinkers allows me to shift the focus from Eurocentric gaze of IR theories towards a trans-disciplinary<sup>120</sup> – if not undisciplined – theoretical lens that does not filter out the racial, gendered, historical, and colonial insights too often set aside to think the “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”.

Hence, the chapter allows for the further problematization of this normative figure and the formulation of a critique of Israeli-Jewish racial identity and European Jewish nationalism (Zionism) while opening avenues for living one’s Israeli-Jewishness without falling in the trap of (a) blaming intra-European colonialism and its atrocities against European Jews to legitimate every policy of the Hebrew state (the politics of victimization and the ‘phallic logic of victimhood’) and (b) confirming the European racist and Orientalizing discourse and prejudice by ‘whitening’ this national identity against the backdrop of internal (*mizrahim*) and external (Palestinian/Arabs/Muslim/Bedouins/Refugees) others.

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<sup>119</sup> Here the parallel with Achille Mbembe’s postcolonial Africa is obvious, especially when he writes: “When the question was asked, during the heyday of colonialism, whether self-government was possible, it was never to engage the general question of being and time – in other words, of life – but rather to facilitate native people’s struggle to take over the apparatus of the state. The power to risk one’s life – [...] – peters out in the prose of autochtony.” in Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 263.

<sup>120</sup> Shapiro, *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method*.

## The Sabra

As it is often the case with nationalist narratives such as Zionism, “a quasi-equivalence is established” between the body politic (understood in racial terms) and the geography of the nation-state.<sup>121</sup> Israel makes no exception here. Indeed, within the specific Zionist settler colonial violent cartography we encounter an *exceptional* Israeli national subject epitomized by the masculine figure of the “Native Israeli”, “Native Hebrew”, or “New Jew” – the sabra (*tsabar* in Hebrew).

Indicatively, the sabra got its appellation from the Middle Eastern cactus’ fruit with thorns outside and a soft inside, itself called sabra (prickly pear). Like the fruit, the sabra is said to possess a rugged outside appearance of somebody who works with its hands in order to “make the desert bloom”. Somewhat provincial, he “conceals a kind heart with brusque manners that successfully disassociate him or her from the Diaspora Jew” who is said to be overtly intellectual, frail, and “clumsy” handed.<sup>122</sup> As Yael Zerubavel explains, “the New Hebrew, later nicknamed ‘Sabra,’ was characterized as young and robust, daring and resourceful, direct and down-to-earth, honest and loyal, ideologically committed and ready to defend his people to the bitter end.” As such, he was the perfect anti-thesis of the Zionist perception of the European Diasporic Jew which, “influenced by the anti-Semitic depictions [... was] portrayed as uprooted, cowardly and manipulative, old and sickly, helpless and defenseless in face of persecution, interested in materialistic gains or conversely, excessively immersed in religion and spirituality.”<sup>123</sup> The sabra, despite being born in a geographical “East,” shares nothing of his provincials. Opposed to the emasculated figure of the European Jew who “went to the slaughterhouse like sheep” and the Arab/Muslim figure who is the epitome of the deviant, barbaric, irrational, perverse, sick, infantile and deranged, the sabra is thus said to possess all the

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<sup>121</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 256.

<sup>122</sup> Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 8; Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 274.

<sup>123</sup> Zerubavel, “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and Jewish Past,” 116.

intellectual and humane qualification of the modern Western (teleologically oriented) subject paired with a ruggedness, genuine, and daring character that make him exceptional.<sup>124</sup>

The cultural identity of the sabra is derived from its racial status; here Jewishness, something one could think of as a religious attribute, is racialized through the various institutions and ministries that classify Israeli-citizens.<sup>125</sup> These institutions can do so insofar as Zionism has reinterpreted Jewish Messianism and the “chosen people” in nationalist terms. This cultural identity is also derived from its status as a *native*<sup>126</sup>, born in Israel, British Mandate Palestine (*Yishuv*), or Palestinian Occupied Territories. Obviously, in the case of Israel, this is complicated by the various waves of immigrations and the more recent (1951) Law of Return that grants equal citizenship to Jewish immigrants from around the world who do *aliyah* (literally *ascent* in Hebrew). The latter, as exemplified by the status of the last sea travel on the boat (as in the *Exodus* narrative), becomes a process of becoming native in the form of a return to the mythical point of departure. As Antonio Machado once noted in a beautiful poem, seafaring and sea voyage leaves no trace, “no path, but wakes on the sea...”<sup>127</sup> and the boat and the sea, for Zionism, hold this special place that allows the settler colonial project to “cover its tracks and operate towards its self-supersession. [... so that it] *extinguishes* itself.”<sup>128</sup> Somewhat ironically, it is this “native” status which seems to allow partisans of Israel’s policies to speak in the name of all Jews and to extend their worldviews to the rest of the Diaspora and to look down upon

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<sup>124</sup> An article published in 2004 revealed that the importance of the archetype of the “Native Israel” (Sabra) is still salient, if not the main organizer of what defines “Israeliness”. Sela-Sheffy, ““What Makes One an Israeli?”; Moreover, Yael Zerubavel noted that “the growing distance from the settlement period [that is from Sabra identity narrative] has given rise to a growing nostalgia towards this past. This trend is manifested in the establishment of formal commemorative sites of the pioneer past in contemporary Israel. The proliferation of ‘settlement museum’ in local communities across the country is an obvious outgrowth of this trend.” in Zerubavel, “Revisiting the Pioneer Past,” 212.

<sup>125</sup> The Israeli ID cards indicate “Jew”, “Arab”, “Druze”, etc. See for instance Lustick, “Israel as a Non-Arab State.”

<sup>126</sup> Achilles Mbembe refers to this historicist form of thinking as “the burden of the metaphysics of difference” Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 240.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Antonio Machado “Caminante no hay camonio”

<sup>128</sup> Veracini, “Introducing,” 3.



them (another form of anti-semitism), calling them “self-hating Jews” if their views contrast with the Israeli State’s.<sup>129</sup>

As we shall see, this sabra subject is traversed by contradictions and tensions. A tension “between voluntarism and victimization”, such as in the case of postcolonial Africa,<sup>130</sup> whereby the voluntarist character of the *halutzim* (pl. Hebrew, literally “pioneers”, refers to the first settlers during the *Yishuv*) – an early instantiation of the sabra – “making the desert bloom,” contrast radically with a “cult of victimization” expressed through the representations of threats ranging from the Arab mobs and wandering Bedouins (in British Mandate Palestine) to a Hamas supported by an equally threatening nuclear Iran today, all seeking to prevent the Zionist project of securing a Jewish home in the Middle East. The Israeli-Jew, according to this victimization narrative, is supposed to be the forever castrated subject of Europe and conversely, when he sings *ha’olam kulo negdeinu* (that “the whole world is against us”), he also wield his guns, missiles, and canons as thousands of erected phallus; a finger salute to a world it wished without Other(s) (like Herzl’s island in the South Seas). This hatred of the world outside Israel takes its full meaning in the single Hebrew word *yerida* (literally *descent* in Hebrew, as opposed to *aliyah*). Indeed, a hatred of the world outside Israel that becomes even more evident when one considers Israel’s nuclear military policy and its “Samson Option” whereby Israel’s right to exist is uphold above everything else; to the point where the existence of *life* itself becomes secondary.<sup>131</sup> A rhetoric that, as Achille Mbembe writes, is “at once xenophobic, racist, negative, and circular.”<sup>132</sup>

Another tension related to this castration/phallic logic and victimhood is the one whereby Zionism claims for Jews a membership to humanity (read world of nations) while also demanding that the Jewish people also be recognized as particular chosen people, possessing a particular privileged status in the pyramid of victimhood (phallic logic of victimhood). This

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<sup>129</sup> For a recent example of such patrozining expression, see Oren, *Ally*.

<sup>130</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 243.

<sup>131</sup> Hersh, *The Samson Option*.

<sup>132</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 252 Israel’s Prime Minsiter Benjamin Netanyahu’s cabinet obsession with Iran is but the latest expression of this “neurosis of victimization” which requires the superstition of a “second Holocaust” to function, even when the Mossad says the opposite.

tension is doubled by the emphasis and centrality in Zionist historiography of *sacrifice* (of the self and Other(s)) for the nation and the land; to the extent that the *sabra* takes on the roles of the victim, the sacrificed, and the sacrificer, all at once. When explored and queered these tensions reveal the structure and modalities of power and the politics behind the naturalization of Israel and the Sabra as specific continuities of a “modern” gendered masculine Occident. This heteronormative subject is central to the cultural governance of the gendered subjects in Israel.<sup>133</sup>

A close reading of the Zionist discourse and practices that embody a specific Jewish and Israeli mode of subjectivity suggests that this discourse serves to instantiate and sequester a Zionist national gendered subject. Indeed, with the rise of the gendered Israeli Western/Masculine subject came a variety of in-between queered Jewish subjectivities such as the ‘backward’ *Ostjuden*, the ‘weak’ Holocaust survivor, the “lazy” Oriental Jew (*Mizrahi*) and other non-Jewish subjectivities such as the primitive and savage Arab, the Bedouin “brethren,” and the ‘loyal’ Druze that have been excluded from that which is considered properly Jewish, Israeli, and/or civilized.<sup>134</sup> Through orientalizing,<sup>135</sup> marginalization, acculturation, mandatory military service, schooling and other processes that serve the purpose of cultural governance, the diversity exemplified by the non-Jewish minority groups and various waves of Jewish immigration (*aliyot*, pl. Hebrew of *aliyah*) from Eastern Europe, Yemen, North Africa, Iran, Latin America, Ethiopia, and Iraq amongst other places has been effectively policed and folded back into the Zionist/Ashkenazi/Occidental narrative.<sup>136</sup> These are processes of cultural governance that serves the purposes of creating and maintaining a particular proselyte Western settler colonial project in historical Palestine.

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<sup>133</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*; On “cultural governance” see Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*.

<sup>134</sup> As Lorenzo Veracini explains, one of the defining components of settler colonial societies is the settler/indigenous/exogenous “triangular relations” whereby the settler establishes itself as the norm through the ethnification of immigrant minorities and what Partha Chatterjee has called the “rule of colonial difference” Veracini, “On Settlerhood,” 2011; Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 10.

<sup>135</sup> The term comes from Edward Said. The concept of Orientalism must be understood as a discourse which can be “discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.” Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

<sup>136</sup> Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel”; Svirsky, *After Israel*.

## Colonial Desire: Enlightenment, Imperialism, Reform Judaism

*I am talking of millions of men who have been skillfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement.*<sup>137</sup>

*Herzl did not give up on modernity; he gave up on Europe.*<sup>138</sup>

The figure of the sabra is closely associated with Zionism. However, its genealogy can be traced back to the beginning of European Enlightenment, even pre-dating Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskala*) and its heritage, Reform Judaism. To be more precise, biopolitical elements central to our understanding of the contemporary figure of the sabra were already taking shape in Europe through representation of the European Jew as a weak, effeminate, intellectual, and oriental figure with an unfit body. This European-given Jewish identity would become the central difference organizing the sense of what it is to be a “Native Hebrew” or the “New Hebrew” (other terms predating the sabra appellation). And in glaring contrast with this effeminate and backward European “Jew in general”, we also find central elements of the sabra trope in the early figures of the “court Jew” and later of the “exception Jew”.<sup>139</sup>

For an illustration of the centrality of the idea of the Jew in European nations’ self-actualization, it is useful to turn to Part I of Hannah Arendt’s *Origin of Totalitarianism* where she dedicates considerable attention to the various modes of Jewish self-fashioning and coping with the rise of Judeophobia during European Enlightenment and its transformation into political antisemitism with the crisis of capitalism and the birth of imperialism.

According to Arendt, court Jews were Jewish individuals who served as bankers or moneylenders to the various crowns of early modern Europe of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In

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<sup>137</sup> Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*.

<sup>138</sup> Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 109.

<sup>139</sup> On the “court Jews” see Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, chap. 2: The Jews, the Nation-State, and the Birth of Antisemitism; On the “exception Jews” in France and Germany see *ibid.*, 61–88; The expression “Jew in general” is Arendt’s *ibid.*, 66–67.

exchange for their services, they were often granted nobility titles and enjoyed exclusive rights and liberties as well as living conditions that far outreached the ones of other Jews and non-Jews. Hence, their Prussian name: *Generalprivilegierte Juden*. Arendt illustrates how, with the advent of the French Revolution in 1789 and the rise of the modern European Nation-States, the privileges, which had been reserved exclusively to court Jews, were extended to a larger portion of Jews of the wealthy class, mainly constituted of bankers and merchants. With the advent of the French Revolution, Napoleonic conquests, European ‘Enlightenment’, its ‘Emancipation’ edicts<sup>140</sup> and its “new humanism”, Euro-Christians started demanding from “those unfortunate Asiatic refugees, the Jews...”<sup>141</sup>, to ‘Westernize’ or ‘Occidentalize’ by reforming their lifestyles, and “prove their fitness for equal rights” by shedding their ‘backward’ traditions.<sup>142</sup>

The key to emancipation was supposed to be education.<sup>143</sup> J. G. Herder, one of the strongest advocates for the emancipation and integration of the Jews, along with Wilhelm von Humbolt, argued for such educational process. Education would liberate the “new specimens of humanity” (the Jews) from “the old and proud national prejudices, ...customs that do not belong to our age and constitutions’, so that Jews could become ‘purely humanized,’ and of service to ‘the development of the sciences and the entire culture of mankind’.”<sup>144</sup> Hence, similarly to European thinkers of abolition, most of the proponents of emancipation placed the Jews – the “lowest possible class of white men”<sup>145</sup> – inside the “circle” of humanity, only, the latter had to shed their “backward” *customs*<sup>146</sup> and adopt pre-defined modes of being that fit within the circle. As such, it is perhaps better to heed Achille Mbembe and speak of *conversion* rather than *emancipation* for “[t]his conversion was the condition for [a Jew] being perceived and

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<sup>140</sup> Emancipation edicts from 1791 in France to 1812 in Prussia, and in-between the other Kingdoms and Duchies that now are part of Germany.

<sup>141</sup> The phrase is Christian Wilhelm Dohm’s. He was one of the most important advocate of Jewish emancipation during the second half of the 18th century. As quoted in Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism,” 490.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.; Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates*, 4.

<sup>143</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 56.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>145</sup> Chamberlain, as quoted in Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*, 13.

<sup>146</sup> The move from racial indelible and unique properties of blacks and Jews to the concept of reformable “customs” is well described in Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 247.

recognized as a fellow human being and for his otherwise indefinable humanity to enter representation. [...] To recognize this individuality [...] was to do way with difference.”<sup>147</sup> In other words, this impetus to educate, ‘cultivate,’ and ‘modernize’ the Jews was characterized by a double movement where Jewish alterity (read ‘abnormality’<sup>148</sup>) was simultaneously revealed and rejected in a first movement in order to then be translated and assimilated into the Euro-Christian (‘normal’) world.<sup>149</sup> In the words of Achille Mbembe, “difference was recognized, but only insofar as it implied inequalities that were, moreover, considered natural to the extent that it justified discrimination and, in the most extreme cases, segregation.”<sup>150</sup> As Hannah Arendt points out, this double movement implied an ironic and ambiguous assumption that the Jews should assimilate, yet remain Jews: “to be and yet not to be Jews.”<sup>151</sup> Arendt summarizes the situation thus:

What non-Jewish society demanded was that the newcomer be as ‘educated’ as itself, and that, although he not behave like an ‘ordinary Jew,’ he be and produce something out of the ordinary, since, after all, he was a Jew.<sup>152</sup>

It is worth noting, then, that the Jews – these “strange people from Asia”<sup>153</sup> – seemed to possess the “foreign, exotic appeal”<sup>154</sup> that were attributed to the ‘savages’ and *indigènes* of the colonies, but with an additional capacity to reach the level of the Euro-Christian education and ‘civilizational’ level. In between the lines of education, acculturation, and assimilation lay the practices of orientalization. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ‘democratization’ and extension of privileges once reserved to court and wealthy Jews (more or less 20% of the Jewish population in Prussia for instance) to almost 90% of the Jewish population created a void of Otherness for Western European Jews. The latter sought to construct their ‘civilized’ identity: “Jews had to differentiate themselves clearly from the ‘Jew in general’”<sup>155</sup>, and being the privileged of the local Monarchy

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>148</sup> “Abnormal” to be understood as in deviating from the norm, the common.

<sup>149</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 248.

<sup>150</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 247.

<sup>151</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 56, fn. 2 The quote is from the theologian is H. E. G. Paulus (see his pamphlet from 1831).

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>153</sup> J. G. Herder as quoted in *ibid.*, 57.

<sup>154</sup> The expression is Hannah Arendt’s *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 65.

was no longer an option. Racial and orientalist discourses on other Jews from Eastern Europe and elsewhere became handy.

European orientalism played a major role in shaping ethnic inequality amongst Jews in Israel. While most understanding of this exclusion usually posit it as a function of Jewish societal dynamics on Israeli territory, this exclusion should be located within an earlier history of a Jewish encounter with orientalism and Western European colonialism. In sum, prior to their immigration to Israel, Jews from around the world had been stigmatized as Oriental.<sup>156</sup> For some of the French Jews from Bordeaux and Avignon right after the 1791 edict, it meant protesting “violently against the French government’s granting equality to the Jews of the Eastern Provinces”.<sup>157</sup> For German Jews, it meant orientalizing the Eastern European Jews; the latter, the *Ostjuden*, contrasted with the “educated Jews of Berlin”.

Yet, to a significant extent, this process of ‘Orientalization’ and racialization stigmatized the European Jewish communities, inflicting what we could call a “colonial wound”.<sup>158</sup> It is in large part this desire that lead to the Jewish “reform” movement (*Haskala*, “Jewish Enlightenment”) and “reformists” (*maskilim*) such as Moses Mendelssohn, Judah Leib Gordon, and, later, Abraham Geiger, Leon Pinsker, and Max Nordau amongst others. Becoming “civilized Jews” was for the Reformists a priority. Indeed, this movement advocated not only for the reform of socio-cultural and religious Jewish practices, but also for a reform of the Jewish body. Reform Judaism was the answer to the idea shared by secularized Jews (who themselves adopted the European anti-Semitic discourse) that Jewish history since the beginning of the *galut* was animated by a narrative of “historical degradation”, or, to use Max Nordau’s famous book title: “Degeneracy” (*Entartung*).<sup>159</sup> For instance, Sander Gilman – amongst others<sup>160</sup> – notes Theodor Herzl’s tendency to internalize the antisemitic image of the Jew as feminine, physically weak,

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<sup>156</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism.”

<sup>157</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 18.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism”; See also Goffman, *Stigma*.

<sup>159</sup> See Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 241 for a discussion of the expression in the African context.

<sup>160</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism”; Bar-Yosef, *A Villa in the Jungle*.

sexually deviant and even as black.<sup>161</sup> Hence, European Jewish reformists (*miskilim*) took on the responsibility to change the specific representations of their Orientalized ‘backward’, ‘abnormal’, ‘sick’, and effeminate Jewish characters. At a minimum then, this process of secularization and ‘integration’ – or, plainly said, of intra-European colonization, orientalizing, and conversion – was more like a two-way street than a one way; a “co-invention” (to use Mbembe’s expression) whereby Gentiles and Jews defined each other through the lens of the Other’s otherness.<sup>162</sup>

As I illustrate more fully in the next chapter on violence, homonormativity and erotics, the Jewish body was of particular importance. Beyond the body, Arendt identified specific attitudes or “behavior patterns of assimilated Jews, determined by this continuous concentrated effort to distinguish themselves [from the ‘Jew in general’] ...”.<sup>163</sup> As she notes, these “patterns” “created a Jewish type that [was] recognizable everywhere” and the latter is certainly part of the genealogy of the contemporary Sabra. Moreover, the discourse of “rehabilitation” adopted by Reformist (and later Zionists to a certain extent) functioned as a mode of “self-validation” that, nevertheless, “does not challenge the fiction of race”.<sup>164</sup> Hence, Zionism and its (re)construction of a rehabilitated or redeemed Jewish subjects (from the “Exception Jew” to the “New Jew” or sabra) – like other redemptive discourses such as Pan-Africanism,<sup>165</sup> Pan-Arabism, and negritude – does not deny the fact that Jews belong to a distinctive race. It simply stands against the fact that this race is assigned a sub-human or inferior status outside Modernity’s circle.<sup>166</sup> In

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<sup>161</sup> Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 171–200.

<sup>162</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism”; Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*.

<sup>163</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 66.

<sup>164</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 254.

<sup>165</sup> On the cases of negritude and Pan-Africanism, see *ibid*.

<sup>166</sup> Patrick Wolfe discusses this point eloquently: “Zionism, [...], was a conscious exercise in auto-racialisation. It embraced European colonial discourse, including race, nationalism, and even, albeit strategically, antisemitism itself. [...] In aspiring to export its racial monolith, Zionism did not seek to undo antisemitism. It did not aspire to a race-free or multiracial society. Rather it retained the racial topography that it shared with antisemitism and sought to project it, structurally intact, to another country.” Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 107, 110.

fact, other races, and especially the “Arab” becomes the inferior against which the Jewish Self elevates itself to the height of Euro-Westerners.<sup>167</sup>

In any case, the behavioral patterns and embodiment of the assimilated “exception Jew” meant that he had to be “strange and exciting, to develop a certain immediacy of self-expression and presentation”; to appear exotic without being threatening to the Euro-Christian way of life. He was best exemplified by the adage “a man in the street and a Jew at home”.<sup>168</sup> In other words, Judaism passed from a set of beliefs, rites, and religious practices to a set of psychological (and physiological) qualities that constituted one’s “Jewishness”. In other words, a Jew’s “Jewishness” thus became a concern to the extent that he knew (from the internalized stigma) that he shared some distinctive psychological qualities that made him a Jew, but he also did not want to be part of the “Jew in general” population, which was nothing but exotic enough to make it to the salons and higher circles of society. That is, political equality for all (including Jews) meant that the former privileged accorded to the court Jews and Jewish state bankers were abolished, and Jews in search of social distinction had to look elsewhere than the State’s institutions. In the aristocratic and bourgeois salons of Paris and Berlin, assimilated Jews (who always happened to be part of a bourgeois minority) who aspired to be accepted by the noblesse of the time instrumentalized and aestheticized their ‘distinctive’ racial attributes that made them exotically different and attractive to the Gentile. Race thus became, for the “exception Jews”, the last rampart for constructing one’s exceptionality against the drive of conversion, assimilation, and “emancipation”.<sup>169</sup>

This form of aestheticization of one’s Jewish character (read as difference) or of self-fashioning was the outcome of the politics of conversion and assimilation of the secularized Jews (the “Exception Jews”) whose cultivation had made them candidates for citizenship and civil

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<sup>167</sup> Cf. Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*; Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel”; Lustick, “Israel as a Non-Arab State.”

<sup>168</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 67.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 78, 85; “Comparably, in eliminating the court Jew and his privileged successors, along with the cleavage between Eastern and Western European Jews, emancipation marked out the monolithic Jewishness that would become antisemitism’s object of persecution.” Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 86.



rights.<sup>170</sup> Those “exception Jews” who made it to the salons of Berlin or Paris’ Faubourg Saint-Germain sat next to the “inverts” and homosexuals; both Jewishness and homosexuality were thus exotic “fashionable vices ... [that] became very much alike indeed.”<sup>171</sup> This form of Jewish self-aesthetization thus played along the lines of Western European racial logic operating by the annexation of the racial Other and its debasement in the net of frivolity, exotism, and entertainment.<sup>172</sup> As such, Jewishness was perverted and aestheticized into an exotic vice of Otherness, just like the colonized women were for the white colonial men of the time on the African continent.<sup>173</sup>

This embodiment of the desire to become properly “Modern” or “European” meant that Judaism (as a set of religious practices, rites, values, and beliefs) had been reduced (and here Arendt would say “degenerated”) “into a simple fact of birth”<sup>174</sup> : a biopolitical Jewishness. She summarizes:

Secularization, therefore, finally produced that paradox, so decisive for the psychology of modern Jews, by which assimilation – in its liquidation of national consciousness, its transformation of a national religion into a confessional denomination, and its meeting of the half-hearted and ambiguous demands of state and society by equally ambiguous devices and psychological tricks – engendered a very real chauvinism, [...] the perverted nationalism in which [...] ‘the individual is himself the thing to be worshipped; the individual is his own ideal and even his own idol.’ From now on, the old religious concept of chosenness was no longer the essence of Judaism; it became instead the essence of Jewishness.<sup>175</sup>

According to Arendt, “[t]he great man of the ‘exception Jews’ was Benjamin Disraeli”, who, coming from an assimilated family converted to Christianity, thought of himself as the “chosen man of the chosen race” and had developed for himself an “entire set of theories about Jewish influence and organization” as well as about the grandeur of a Jewish *race* that “represents all

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<sup>170</sup> On a similar process in the context of Enlightenment and the colonized of Africa see Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 248–49.

<sup>171</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 80.

<sup>172</sup> I am paraphrasing Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre* - N° 436, 105. who discuss the same situation but for the XIX century Negroes, quoting Sylvie Chalaye, “brighten worldly assemblies, bring a touch of exotism and color to the heart of gallant parties.

<sup>173</sup> Klaus Theweleit details how this gender and sexual anxiety played out in Germany after the first World War in Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*.

<sup>174</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 73.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

that is spiritual in our nature”. To him, that “unmixed race of a first-rate organization” was “the key to history”, no matter the “language and religion”.<sup>176</sup> At a minimum, Hannah Arendt’s reading of Benjamin Disraeli’s biography testifies to the power of the Enlightenment’s philosophical tropes (reason, universality, the good, race, etc.) to seduce (and stigmatize<sup>177</sup>). Indeed, she wrote elsewhere: “those Jews who no longer believe in their God in a traditional way but continue to think themselves as ‘chosen’ in some fashion or other, can mean by it nothing other than that by nature they are wiser or more rebellious or more salt of the earth. And that would be, twist and turn as you like it, nothing other than a version of racist superstition.”<sup>178</sup>

The effects of this new form of race thinking became visible to all during the Dreyfus Affair in France, whereby a French Jewish officer in the army was falsely accused of treason, then cashiered and eventually sent in exile. Indeed, according to Hannah Arendt, it is the Dreyfus Affair that brought to the light of the careful observer the reality of the 19<sup>th</sup> century political anti-semitism and what the 20<sup>th</sup> century would reserve for them in Europe.<sup>179</sup> The Affair developed in a French context in which social and political struggles for the institutions of the still newly formed Third Republic pitted the various groups of society against one another. The church, the socialists, the radicals, businessmen, the bourgeoisie, and vestiges of the old aristocracy saw in the parliament and the government tools for whomever of their adversaries had managed to gain power.

Developments in the capitalist world of the time also contributed to the rise of this form of political antisemitism. As such, the Panama scandal was the cherry on the sunday of the capitalism-inflicted decay of the state’s institutions. Historically, Jews had always relied on the strength of the state’s institutions to gain a certain political immunity, and now that the latter were at their weakest, and as antisemitism gained political capital both the left and the right targeted Jews.

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 71–73.

<sup>177</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism”; Goffman, *Stigma*.

<sup>178</sup> Hannah Arendt in “Jewish Writings” as quoted in Butler, *Parting Ways*, 137.

<sup>179</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 4, 93.

The Jewish bourgeois and “parvenus” “deep in the process of a disintegrating assimilation” failed to identify the Affair as a political attack against Jews (as a group).<sup>180</sup> They had merely seen in it a personal case for the reinstatement of social status. Hence, when antisemitism was directed against one of them, their reaction was to divert it towards their poorer unassimilated immigrant brethren (the *Ostjuden*), those who still sported the sidelocks and other distinctive marks of orthodoxy.<sup>181</sup> According to Bernard Lazare, one of the rare French Jews to speak out in defense of Dreyfus at the time, the emancipated French Jews were so concerned about their social status that for the three dozen of French Jews who were ready to support the Colonel Dreyfus, “thousands [were] ready to stand guard over Devil’s Island, alongside the most rabid patriots of the country.”<sup>182</sup> Ironically, as Hannah Arendt points out, the Dreyfus family itself “belonged to that section of French Jewry which sought to assimilate by adopting its own brand of antisemitism.”<sup>183</sup> At a minimum, then, the Affair marked the end of clerical anti-Semitism or Judeophobia and the arrival of a much more dangerous form of *political* antisemitism which was the direct result of the “special condition of the nation-state” and the rise of an imperialistic form of capitalism.<sup>184</sup> One could even argue that the once oxymoronic figure of the Christian-Jew no longer was an oxymoron (as embodied by Benjamin Disraeli for instance). In all, the most important legacy of the Dreyfus Affair, according to Hannah Arendt, was the “birth of the Zionist movement”.<sup>185</sup> The latter garnered significant influence even outside the Zionist circles per se by critically and pedagogically engaging the psychological and social dilemma that the desire to become a “modern European” created.<sup>186</sup>

This political antisemitism was the result of an assemblage of factors of which the rise of the nation-state as the state of the bourgeoisie and its capitalist enterprises was the most important. With the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century over-accumulation crisis came imperialism. The latter was the solution to this over-accumulation *and* unemployed superfluous masses. The bourgeoisie and the middle classes from West European countries rushed to invest abroad whatever they had managed to

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 117.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>186</sup> See fn. 61. Ibid., 79.

save with the promise of great returns. From promises of tremendous profits came tremendous losses, such as the aforementioned Panama scandal in which half a million middle-class Frenchmen lost all their savings.<sup>187</sup> In the face of decaying state institutions – partly responsible of such scandals – and the apparently inevitable collapse of the capitalist nation-state system, imperialism appeared as the only lifebuoy. For it managed to solve momentarily capitalism's problems and it was the only source of common interest for each of the European nations taken as a whole.<sup>188</sup> Those from various socio-economic backgrounds who had lost everything formed what Arendt calls the “mob”. The latter, in its alliance with capital, became the backbone of imperialist enterprises whenever and wherever it needed superfluous bodies to fill the positions of colonizers, administrators, civil servants and soldiers.<sup>189</sup>

## **Imperialism and Superfluity**

To be sure, in an age of rising nationalism, imperialism was, at first glance, a rather odd phenomenon. The fundamental principles of nationalism – equality of a body politic (the nation) in a bounded territorial entity (the state) – simply did not square with imperialism's objectives of unlimited territorial expansion and the integration of the various “superfluous” indigenous populations dwelling in the colonies. It is here that the concept of race came handy.<sup>190</sup> Processes of racialization separated those who could be counted in the body politic from the “superfluity”

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 95–99, 149.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>189</sup> See especially *ibid.*, chap. 7.

<sup>190</sup> Hannah Arendt summarizes the situation appropriately when she writes:

In a society of clashing interests, where the common good was identified with the sum total of individual interests, expansion as such appeared to be a possible common interest of the nation as a whole. Since the owning and dominant classes had convinced everybody that economic interest and the passion for ownership are a sound basis for the body politic, even non-imperialist statesmen were easily persuaded to yield when a common economic interest appeared on the horizon. These then are the reasons why nationalism developed so clear a tendency toward imperialism, the inner contradiction of the two principles notwithstanding. The more ill-fitted nations were for the incorporation of foreign people (which contradicted the constitution of their own body politic), the more they were tempted to oppress them. In theory, there is an abyss between nationalism and imperialism; in practice, it can and has been bridged by tribal nationalism and outright racism. *Ibid.*, 152–153. See also 183–184.

of the others.<sup>191</sup> It is possible to understand the process of casting out these superfluous men who fled Europe to colonize Africa, Australia, and other “colonies” represents a process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. In these spaces beyond the control of the State (European metropole), War Machines are born. Indeed, many of these superfluous men and women went on to create radically new modes of organization and social formations that, as Conrad’s novels and short stories appositely depict, dwelled and thrived thanks to their remarkably creative – yet horrific – relationship with violence.<sup>192</sup>

In the imperialist alliance of capital and the mob, the former always had the initiative on the latter as long as there was available space outside Europe. Because it lacked that space and its resources, all what continental imperialism had to offer was “an ideology and a movement”, a form of “tribal nationalism”. And it is precisely thanks to this tribal nationalism that, when it came to this continental imperialism, the mob inevitably gained the initiative.<sup>193</sup>

Situated as such, the Holocaust and Zionism appear less as inexplicable aberrations of history and more as tragic, yet European made, events – a form of “national-colonialism”<sup>194</sup>. Here, in other words, what Arendt is doing is in fact tracing the process(es) of deterritorialisation of bodies and their emergence as a War Machine in the confines of the colonies, and subsequently the reterritorialisation of this War Machine (the institutionalization of its new form

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<sup>191</sup> Disraeli’s fascination for his own Jewish racial attributes are better understood when historically, politically, and sociologically contextualized as such. Little did he know that the “mob”, inspired by the same principle of race, would come for his brethren sooner than later. That is when there were no more space available for unrestricted expansion and that the European nations’ interests, captured by the bourgeoisie, clashed against each other, and inspired the pan-movements and its “continental imperialism”. Ibid., 154–155. On the pan-movements and continental imperialism, see Chapter 8.

<sup>192</sup> Especially in “An Outpost of Progress” in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*; See also Lindquist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*.

<sup>193</sup> the concept of “tribal nationalism” is obviously Arendt’s, see Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 225–26 But Arendt does not develop in an extended philosophical manner on the concept itself. ; However, Achille Mbembe does tease out the philosophical and genealogical roots of this tribalism or “tribal nationalism” by linking it to the birth of monotheistic religions (first Judaism, then Christianity) and their process of “narcissistic self-definition”. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 219. I shall develop further on this in the next chapter.

<sup>194</sup> I am translating Mbembe’s phrase “national-colonialisme”. Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 96–103.

of violence) in Europe with anti-Semitic policies and ultimately the Holocaust. Aimé Césaire also pointed out that what the European Jews experienced is certainly not an inexplicable aberration of History, but a continuation of Europe's "colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the 'coolies' of India and the 'niggers' of Africa."<sup>195</sup> Fanon concurred that Euro-Christian violence against the Jews represented the geographical extension of "a colonial system in the very heart of Europe,"<sup>196</sup> while Hannah Arendt contended that "it may be justifiable to consider the whole period [of European colonialism and imperialism] a preparatory stage for coming catastrophes"<sup>197</sup> that were the Second World War and the death camps.<sup>198</sup> In short, race was a colonial invention, the by-product of colonialism.<sup>199</sup>

Stigmatized by the euro-Christian discourse and its violence, some European-Jews thus undertook the project of historically rescuing themselves from the obscurity and alienation that made their mode of subjectivity unrecognizable or external to the Western Christian European society of 'civilized states'.<sup>200</sup> Similarly to the African experience – with its slavery, colonization, and apartheid – which alienated Africans (on an individual subjectivity level) from themselves and relegated them to "*objecthood*"<sup>201</sup> (Césaire talks of colonialism as a process of "thingification"), the history of intra-European colonialism, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the Holocaust also resulted in "loss of familiarity with the self" for European Jews. Zionism offered

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<sup>195</sup> Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 14.

<sup>196</sup> Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, 33.

<sup>197</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 123.

<sup>198</sup> See also Lindquist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, x.

<sup>199</sup> In its origins [...] as a colonial invention, race was inherently spatial, predicated on externality. Inscribed within race, the spatial implication persists as a trace, distancing racialised communities within or, in the case of Indigenous people, undoing their externality. Jews had long been distanced within Europe, but in ways that presupposed inequality. Emancipation, [...], compromised that inequality which was restored by means of the thoroughly modern device of race, recalled from colonial service to effect a moral separation of Jewish people within Europe. In this light, we see that emancipation and assimilation are not merely distinct. They are strategic alternatives." Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 101.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Opondo in Constantinou and Derian, *Sustainable Diplomacies*.

<sup>201</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, "African Modes of Self-Writing," 241.

a specific answer to the social and psychological condition created by this process of “thingification” of the European Jews.

## **The Birth of Zionism: Nationalism and Settler Colonialism**

*Domination consists, for the dominators and for all others, in sharing the same phantasms.*<sup>202</sup>

Zionism, as a modern nationalist movement, was born in the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, most of the tenets of Zionism pre-date it, and thus, Zionism should be seen as the achievement of polyphonic yet more or less cohesive ideology through the knitting of ideas and discourses from various background. For instance, its redemptive side – marked as a return to the land of Israel – was already part of the Messianic tradition. The idea to find a home for the Jewish people – not necessarily in the form of a Jewish nation-state in historical Palestine – was one early expression of this idea. However, the idea that this home should take the form of a Jewish nation-state in historical Palestine appeared only after consummate debate and the integration of biblical *and* modern nationalist discourses as well as discourses on the *race* and the Jewish body. In the shadow of this discourse on the body and on the necessity of a Jewish nation-state was the constant murmur of the Euro-Christian antisemitic voice and its racist, nationalist logic. A logic that, as will shall see, Zionism would adopt to a certain extent. Hence, Zionism is the product of this complex interdiscursivity or heteroglossia.

The first Zionist Congress took place in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, and was presided by the Austro-Hungarian Theodor Herzl. It is no surprise that the first Zionists and Zionism’s leaders came from Central and Eastern Europe, and chiefly from the former Austrian Empire and Russia (in the case of Ze’ev (Vladimir) Jabotinski for instance), for, as we have seen above, it is from these regions where continental imperialism and its tribal nationalism had gained significant popularity. If Zionism admittedly always has been a political movement, before the arrival of Hitler in Germany it hardly ever produced political convictions according to Arendt. That is,

Zionism in the decade after the first World War, and even in the decade preceding it, owed its strength not so much to political insights, as it did to its critical analysis of

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<sup>202</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 231.

psychological reactions and sociological fact. Its influence was mainly pedagogical and went far beyond the relatively small circle of actual members of the Zionist movement.<sup>203</sup>

As such, Zionism bore the same “tribal” characteristics “as the nationalism of those people [of Central and Eastern Europe] who had not participated in national emancipation and had not achieved the sovereignty of the nation-state.”<sup>204</sup> That tribal nationalism, *a contrario* to the chauvinism of Western European nationalisms which is characterized by an extroverted concern with making visible the spiritual and material achievements of the nation, is characterized by an introversion on the individual’s own soul and body which are considered to be the “embodiment of general national qualities.”<sup>205</sup> This is something excessively present at the heart of the sabra discourse. Indeed, Zionism’s political leaders’ discourses were filled with expressions that expressed the redemptive character of Zionism, such as “‘rebirth,’ ‘renaissance,’ ‘the dawn of redemption,’ ‘going from slavery to freedom,’ and ‘the last generation of slavery and the first of the redemption’.”<sup>206</sup>

In addition to the exceptional narration of the nation outlined above, Zionism shares some political characteristics with tribal nationalism. As Hannah Arendt explains, “politically speaking, tribal nationalism always insists that its own people is surrounded by “a world of enemies,” “one against all,” that a fundamental difference exists between this people and all others. It claims its people to be unique, individual, incompatible with all others...”<sup>207</sup> That said, Zionism is certainly not the equivalent of the pan-mouvements in Europe. It does not share their hostility to the state for instance. However, beyond this national tribalism, it also shares inherent political resemblance, such as the historical disagreement amongst various Zionist thinkers about where should lay the frontiers/borders of the Hebrew state (as in the debate between Revisionists and Labour Zionists movements).

What is of striking resemblance between the tribal nationalism and Zionism, is the discourse on “divine choseness”. Of course, as Arendt rightly points out, the Jewish

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<sup>203</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 79, 61.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 42.

<sup>207</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 227.



conceptualization of chosenness had nothing in common with the tribal nationalist theories of the pan-movements.<sup>208</sup> Yet, the discourse on *Jewishness* developed by the secularized Jews – such as Disraeli – which integrated almost all the elements of this tribal understanding (amongst them, race being the most significant) became, ironically, close to the ones of the pan-movements. Here it is apposite to quote Hannah Arendt at length:

If tribal nationalities pointed to themselves as the center of their national pride, regardless of historical achievements and partnership in recorded events, if they believed that some mysterious inherent psychological or physical quality made them the incarnation not of Germany but Germanism, not of Russia, but the Russian soul, they somehow knew, even if they did not know how to express it, that the Jewishness of assimilated Jews was exactly the same kind of personal individual embodiment of Judaism and that the peculiar pride of secularized Jews, who had not given up the claim to chosenness, really meant that they believed they were different and better simply because they happened to be born as Jews, regardless of Jewish achievements and tradition.<sup>209</sup>

In all, I do not believe that Arendt could say, back in 1951, where Zionism was to lead the state of Israel, and therefore part of her writing certainly dismiss the comparison has being exaggerated. Yet, with the historical look we dispose – from the early arrival of the Jews from Middle Eastern countries (Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, etc.) to the latest development in the settlements and occupation of the Palestinian Territories – we are better situated to appreciate the very closeness of these two instantiations of the biopolitics of “divine chosenness”.

Politically and strategically speaking, this concept of “chosenness” offered two advantages according to Arendt. First, “It made nationality a permanent quality which no longer could be touched by history, no matter what happened to a given people – emigration, conquest, dispersion.”<sup>210</sup> In the Israeli context, it is the “Law of Return” of 1950 which essentially institutionalized the Zionist political tenet that Jews form *a* single national body.<sup>211</sup> This is an important tenet of Zionism – held by Herzl, Jabotinski, Weizmann amongst others – which is itself burrowed from German ideologies and historicism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century whereby the nation was said to form a “organic naturalistic” “complete whole” and is characteristic of those

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>211</sup> Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates*, 16.

nationalism which “needed ideological definitions of national unity” in the absence of a bounded national territory which would allow for the concrete organisation of political nationhood.<sup>212</sup>

The second advantage related to “divine closeness”, as Arendt put it, “was that in the absolute contrast between the divine origin of one’s own people and all other nondivine peoples all differences between the individual members of the people disappeared, whether social or economic or psychological.”<sup>213</sup> Here, indeed, the history of the forced integration (read acculturation) of the Middle Eastern and North-African “Arab-Jews” into the proselytist Zionist Eurocentric project – an integration so successful that the term “Arab-Jew” is now an oxymoron in Israel – and their instrumentalisation and marginalization as second class citizens in poor “development towns” for political purposes speaks to this point quite eloquently. No doubt, “divine choseness” was instrumentalised by the secular founders of contemporary Israel for political reasons. In any case, no matter how sadly ironic it is, we have much to learn about the genealogy of Zionism and the modern Zionist subject from the tribal nationalism and the pan-movements.

## **On Settleriness**

These similarities now highlighted, Zionism also was radically different from the ideologies accompanying the pan-movements and continental imperialism in that it also adopted important characteristics of the settler-colonial discourse. That is, the settler-colonial Zionist locus revived redemptive slogans typical of the settler-colonial societies; myths that were similar to the ones Euro-Americans mobilized as part of their national ethnogenesis and for the conquest of the West for instance.<sup>214</sup> The Zionist locus revived the same slogan Euro-Americans used – there is more than a century and a half ago for the conquest of the West – of “a land without

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<sup>212</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2001, 166.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>214</sup> On this particular topic, see Edward Said and Michael Walzer’s debate in Walzer and Said, “An Exchange”; See also Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*; and Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*.

people for a people without a land”, perpetuating the national myth of the nonexistent Arab inhabitants.<sup>215</sup>

Zionism adopted the same attitudes and discourses about the European-Jewish body first articulated by the Euro-Christians and the Jewish Reformists. This process implied reproducing the sovereignty/national model that was itself responsible of the colonial violence against Jews in Europe in the first place and is thus better understood as a colonial legacy of European colonialism.<sup>216</sup> To be more precise, Zionism, as a process of selfcraft responding to the European desire remained uncritical, even trying to remedy to the stigma by reproducing the racial and colonial ontological *apriori*. Chaim Weizmann, a central figure of the Zionist movement who became Israel’s first President in 1948, declared in 1912 that “the greatest challenge to the creative forces of the Jewish people, its redemption from the *abnormalities* of exile”; ‘scattered among foreign cultures ... our life displays somethings *abnormal*’; ‘our relations to the other races and nations would become more *normal*’; ‘We shall revert to *normal* ... ‘like unto all the nations’”.<sup>217</sup> Indeed, just like some discourses on Africa, Zionist “accepted, for the most part, the basic categories then used in Western discourse to account for universal history. The notion of ‘civilization’ was one of these categories.”<sup>218</sup> From Theodor Herzl’s call to establish an Israeli state that would “form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism”<sup>219</sup> to the latest Ramadan “greeting” by Israeli PM Netanyahu, Israel is produced as the sole island of light in a barbaric and hellish surrounding Muslim world.<sup>220</sup> No doubt, Zionism, as a project of decolonization was implemented in a very colonial way. Theodor

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<sup>215</sup> Said, “Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims.”

<sup>216</sup> Smith, “QUEER THEORY AND NATIVE STUDIES The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” 59.

<sup>217</sup> As quoted in Rose, *The Question of Zion*, 76.

<sup>218</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 249.

<sup>219</sup> Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 18.

<sup>220</sup> In this televised declaration, Netanyahu proceeded by depicting the Middle East, saying: “I wish you all the good in the world. This year, as well, we know that the world is not all good. The Islamic world is marking the month of Ramadan even as the Middle East burns in the wake of civil wars and religious wars between Sunnis and Shi’ites.” and then proceeded to represent Israel, saying “he then followed by a depiction of Israel as the opposite: “For our Muslim citizens, Israel will continue to be an island of security and stability in the stormy sea around us, in which extremist Islamic elements murder each other and members of other faiths.” “Netanyahu’s Ramadan ‘Greeting’ to Israeli Muslims in a Word.”

Herzl and other early Zionists were colonized subjects in the sense that they too shared the phantasm of a national and racial state, and thus failed to imagine a Jewish subjectivity outside the ontological premises<sup>221</sup> of the Eurocentric nation-state<sup>222</sup>:

I have already drafted the entire plan. I know everything required for it. Money, money, money, and more money; means of transportation, provisions for a vast multitude, maintenance of discipline organisation ... treaties with head of state ... the construction of new splendid dwelling places. And beforehand, a prodigious propaganda ... pictures, songs ... a flag.<sup>223</sup>

At a minimum then, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Herzl and other Zionism's forefathers inscribed their project in continuity with the European chain of Orientalism. Of course, it was in part due to political and negotiating reasons: they believed that the British colonial administration would be more inclined to lend an overseas territory if it believed it could profit its colonial ventures and serve its interests. But more prominently, these early Zionists had fully integrated the European discourse on the Jew's never-fully-achieved whiteness and thought that maybe, just maybe, if themselves could help redeem a few lost colonial African or Middle Eastern souls through their "African adventures,"<sup>224</sup> they would be accepted within the circle of human civilization.

Hence, insofar as the religious tradition of the diaspora was presented as the problem the Zionists' "negation of the diaspora" (*shlilat hagalat*) – although presented as such – was certainly not a "return" to indigeneity. Indeed, without saying that Jews had no historical or religious connection to historical Palestine it is still possible to affirm that "Zionism created a completely new Hebraic Jewish culture – one that was deeply influenced by a European Ashkenazic ethos and transplanted into the Middle East."<sup>225</sup> Thus, the need for a indigenization of the *Yishuv*.FX, you introduced the language of deterritorialization and reterritorialization earlier in this chapter but you appear to have dropped it. How do D&G's thought tools enhance your analysis? OR do they?

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<sup>221</sup> On the intimacy between racism, colonialism and the birth of the Nation-State, see Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

<sup>222</sup> For a critical analysis of this model, see Campbell, *National Deconstruction*.

<sup>223</sup> As quoted in Rose, *The Question of Zion*, 75–76.

<sup>224</sup> The expression is Golda Meir's in Meir, *My Life*, 306–7.

<sup>225</sup> Rosen, Rabbi Brant., "Yes, Zionism Is Settler Colonialism."

### ***Planting the Sabra Seeds in Palestine: Pioneers and the Yishuv***

Most of Israel's national myths's origins<sup>226</sup> – can be found in the British Mandate *Yishuv*<sup>227</sup> (literally settlement in Hebrew) period, the pre-statehood era – after the arrival of the first wave of immigrants (first *aliyah*) in Palestine in the 1880s and the before creation of the state in 1948. In pre-statehood Israel (British Mandate Palestine), part of the early Zionist discourse on the native Hebrew integrated discourse about the indigeneity of the latter through the integration of Arab or Bedouin symbols, such as the *kafiya* (Hebrew translation of *kûfiya*) and the black *igal* (cord) – the typical Arab and Bedouin headdress – as a symbol of a native Israeli status. Even though Arab and Bedouin populations were considered by European Zionists as inexistent or were considered “primitive”, “backward”, “savage” or “uncivilized”,<sup>228</sup> as if they were part of the natural landscape, they rapidly came to hold an ambiguous place in the construction of the *sabra*'s modern ancestors, the *halutzim* (pl. of *halutz*, literally meaning pioneer).

Indeed, these Arab farmers “appeared to the Jews as primitive and backward, yet the *fellahin* [(Hebrew translation of *fallâhin*)] also served as a source of cultural knowledge and work force employed by the early settler. The *fellahin*'s and the Bedouin sheperds' traditional lifestyle thus presented a symbolic link to the ancient Hebrew who likewise were native farmers and shepherds in that land.”<sup>229</sup> The indigenous population thus played an ambiguous role because it was still considered backward or uncivilized – part of the natural elements and obstacles that shaped the colonial experience of the Jewish settlers. And yet, they were also an

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<sup>226</sup> – myth understood not so much as a fictive story but, as Yael Zerubavel explains, as “a symbolic narrative relating to an important event in the nation's past that embodies sacred national values and is used as a charter for political action. Zerubavel, “The Politics of Interpretation,” 134.

<sup>227</sup> Yael Zerubavel explains that “The Hebrew term *yishuv* designated both the process of settling the land its outcome, the established settlements; but it also emerged as a collective reference to the Jewish society in Palestine. The identification of the entire society as *Yishuv*, that is, “the Settlement”, reflects most clearly the centrality of the process of colonization to Zionist ideology.” in Zerubavel, “Revisiting the Pioneer Past,” 210.

<sup>228</sup> Zerubavel, “Memory, the Rebirth of the Native, and the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ Identity,” 318.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

important link in reestablishing the “chain of generations”, reinscribing the settler colonial project into a native ethos.



**Figure 1: Picture of the Ha-Shomer in 1909.**

The “Eretz-Israeli Hebrew farmers” or the “Hebrew Bedouin” and their native attire were the symbol of the Zionist’s project successful transformation of exilic Jews of the *galut* into native locals, making one with the land.<sup>230</sup> These rejuvenated Jewish settler-farmers were, according to the newly founded agricultural workers association, to form “a new brand of workers-farmers [*poalim-fallahim*] who will be healthy in their bodies and spirit.”<sup>231</sup> The resulting hybrid dress of these “lost sons” of an ancient Israel – integrating the *kafiya*, the *igal*, and sometimes the *abbaya* (Arab overcoat resembling the dress of ancient Hebrew’s) with western dresses – is perhaps the best visual expression of a fundamental tension at the heart of

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 315–16; See also Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” on how becoming native for the settler colonial population becomes one way of eliminating the indigenous population.

<sup>231</sup> As quoted in Zerubavel, “Memory, the Rebirth of the Native, and the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ Identity,” 319.

the Zionist project and Israeli identity: the yearning for an modern Israeli state located in the East but belonging to humanity or, in other words, the European/Western family of “civilized” nations.<sup>232</sup> It expresses a desire to create a “coherent national identity that would articulate Jews’ roots in both” East, and West.<sup>233</sup> The first Zionist paramilitary organization, the *Ha-Shomer* (literally “the Guard” in Hebrew) wandered the hills of Galilee on their horses, themselves dressed as Bedouins and Arabs.<sup>234</sup>

As illustrated above, the Zionist project to found a new Israeli-Jewish society and to create a New Jew was mostly the result of the negative perception of the exilic European Jewish societies and of the Jew of the *galut* more broadly. It was indeed *negative* in the sense that it had no clear positive model for the new Jewish identity. Here, the borrowing of Arab and Bedouin attires and lifestyles became a sort of experimentation made possible by the liminal period of transition that was the early years of the *Yishuv*, mainly during and shortly after the first and second *aliyot* (1880s-1920s).<sup>235</sup> However, this romanticization of the Arabs and Bedouins cultures did not conquer the hearts and minds of all Jewish immigrants of the time, for Arabs and Bedouins were considered by many to be the epitome of the savage Easterner. This trend reflected for them a second process of degeneration into incivility or pre-modernity.<sup>236</sup> In the end, the trend declined drastically as the conflict between indigenous Arab and settler Jewish populations intensified in the 1920s and 1930s.

Yet, the ‘Bedouin Hebrew’ constitutes an important link in the genealogy of the *sabra*. Its role is one of a transitional figure between the exilic Jew and the *halutz* (the Zionist pioneer):

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<sup>232</sup> On the casting of non-Westerners and colonized as outside of humanity see Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing.”

<sup>233</sup> Zerubavel, “Memory, the Rebirth of the Native, and the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ Identity,” 317.

<sup>234</sup> The *Ha-Shomer* is sometimes considered to be the ancestor of the *Palmach*, the elite strike force of the *Haganah* (the military organization sponsored by the Labor Movement from the 1920s and on). Certainly, it inspired the creation of the *Mistarabim* (the *Palmach*’s elite unit operating within the Arab populated areas, adopting Arab clothes and speech).

<sup>235</sup> Zerubavel, “Memory, the Rebirth of the Native, and the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ Identity,” 333–34.

<sup>236</sup> For instance, the historian Yosef Kleusner wrote in 1907: “We, Jews, who lived more than two thousand years among civilized people cannot, and should not, deteriorate again to the cultural level of semi-savage peoples” and the Second Aliyah writer Yosef Hayim Brenner considered the Arabs to be “the Poles of the East” (in other words, the East’s Ostjudens). As quoted in *ibid.*, 331–32.

“The Hebrew-Bedouin identity essentially served as an ideal-type and a literary construct rather than a widely accepted category of everyday use. Like symbolic crutches, it was constructed to help steer the wandering Jew onto a journey of return to his former land and regain his status as a Hebrew native.”<sup>237</sup> Given the Zionist historical dichotomies of a “*decline narrative* from the ‘golden age’ of Antiquity to Jewish life in exile [...] to be replaced by a *progress narrative* beginning with the Zionist return to the Land of Israel and leading towards national redemption,”<sup>238</sup> this ambiguous ideal-type played a key role of juncture or transition. Moreover, it was, without a doubt, an effective settler colonial trope that served to erase the colonial and foreign identity of the settlers and turn them into natives,<sup>239</sup> while helping revive and link the ancient biblical Hebrew history with modern European Jewish immigrants.<sup>240</sup>

### **Frontiersmen: Sabra Aesthetics and the Aesthetics of the Land**

Perhaps, it is Eliezer Smolly’s (sometimes written “Smally”) novel *The Frontiersmen* (*Anshei Bereshit*, 1933) that best illustrates this transitional role and process of self-stylization from the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ who wanders the land to the Kibbutzim who plows and guards it. *The Frontiersmen* begins with Hermoni, a longtime guard, deciding to settle down and thus stops wandering. His settlement is constantly harassed and assaulted by Bedouins, Arabs, animals and insects, as well as illness. The figures of the Arab and the Bedouin take back their position alongside other forces of nature. In the novel’s chapter aptly titled “The Hebrew Bedouin Learns to Plow,” Hermoni learns by himself to use the plow. As he develops his plowing skills, so his love and interest in the land develops. As such, he increasingly feels distant from Jewish city dwellers from Tel Aviv, and increasingly close to the Arab *fellahin*. Yet, ultimately, Smolly

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 334–35.

<sup>238</sup> Zerubavel, “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and Jewish Past,” 115.

<sup>239</sup> As Scott Lauria Morgensen remarks, settler subjects normatively recall and perform indigeneity as a history they at once incorporate and transcend, inhabit and defer. Settler thus are inexplicable apart from their relationality to indigenous people, as well as to form of indigeneity of their own imagining that undergird settler subjectivity. All this structures how European settlers ever come to represent the West.” Morgensen, “The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism,” 59.

<sup>240</sup> As mentioned above, one important characteristics that separates settler colonialism from colonialism is the tendency of the settler colonial project to erase its foreign character by “nativizing” itself. See. Veracini, *On Settleriness*.



reinscribes the distance between Hermoni and the “Arabs” by inserting the events whereby the latter burn Hermoni’s camp. As Yael Zerubavel writes about the novel, “*The Frontiersmen* introduces its hero as having successfully shed his exilic identity by assuming the Hebrew Bedouin identity during his long experience of wandering as a guard. [...] As Smolly’s hero in *The Frontiersmen* demonstrates, [...] the ultimate goal was to restrain that youthful love of wandering by settling down.”<sup>241</sup> The mythical hero of the first *aliyah* had made place for the coming Zionist nationalist-hero of the second and third *aliyot*.

Smolly’s *The Frontiersmen* is a canon in pioneer literature not only because it depicts the process of settling after exile and wandering; but also because it depicts the main protagonist, Hermoni, as the ideal Zionist pioneer, a muscular and secular hero establishing against all odds – sometimes armed with a gun, sometimes armed with a plow – the seeds for the first “sons’ generation” (the first generation Jews born in historical Palestine from European immigrants, the first *sabras*).<sup>242</sup> The farm or *moshava* (pl. *moshavot*, the first Zionist farming villages) – as established by Smolly’s protagonist – became the primary site for realization of the settlement ethos and the Socialist Zionist ideal of “development and growth” (“making the desert bloom”).<sup>243</sup>

Smolly’s novel is not an isolated depiction of the sabra aesthetic. During my stay in Israel in 2014, in the Jaffa port I stumbled upon poster reprints of Aleksanders Ford’s film *Sabra* (1933, also known as *Halutzim*). The latter was meant to be the first feature film with sound in Yiddish filmed in Palestine, transposing the narrative I discuss above to the screen. The aesthetics of the film’s poster (see Figure 1 below) appositely represent the figure of the

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<sup>241</sup> Zerubavel, “Memory, the Rebirth of the Native, and the ‘Hebrew Bedouin’ Identity,” 328, 332.

<sup>242</sup> One cannot but draw the link here between Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies* section where “filiarchy” is discussed. As Theweleit writes: “Patriarchy secures its dominance under fascism in the form of a ‘filiarchy’—that much is clear. Nothing but sons as far as the eye can see—Hitler too is one of their number. ‘The kaiser should have died at the head of his capitulating army.’ This is the reproach on the tip of every tongue; often it is directly voiced. The fact that he failed to do so (and that many older officers opportunistically declared themselves in favor of the republic) has completely destroyed the credibility of the patriarchs. Now it is the turn of the sons.” Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 108.

<sup>243</sup> Zerubavel, “Revisiting the Pioneer Past,” 221.

pioneer/sabra. Namely, a broadchested, strong looking European man (from the color of his skin and his dress) walking the desert with, in his left hand a rescued woman and in his right hand a pike to plow the land. In the foreground, one finds the cactus that gave his name to the sabra, and in the back, one see a small white house built in an oasis in the desert – the sabra's new Eldorado or villa in the jungle.



**Figure 2: Poster of Aleksander Ford's film entitled *Sabra***

The *halutz* was, and still is today, a largely uncontested mythological figure of the pre-statehood Israel. His secular and heroic character – expressed through his readiness to sacrifice his own life for the sake of the nation and land – remained uncontested. Yet, this mythical figure came to be the site of one of the first ideological and political struggles amongst the two most important Zionist movements that set the political checkerboard for Israel's politics until today: the Socialist Zionists (the ancestors of the Mapai, itself the ancestor of the Labour party and more broadly of today's Israel's centre-left parties) and the Revisionists (the ancestors of the Herut, itself the ancestor of the Likud and Israel's political right). The struggle was fought over the meaning of Yosef Trumpeldor's life and ultimately his death alongside five of his fellow *moshavniks* during the battle of Tel Hai (also spelled Tel Chai), in Northern Galilee in March 1920. To be more precise, the struggle was ultimately about the definition of what "pioneering"

was, and what constituted the perfect embodiment of the *halutz* (and ultimately the sabra).<sup>244</sup> Both Zionist movements sought to capture the figure of Trumpeldor (and his death) to steer the interpretation of the myth of the battle of Tel Hai for their own political purpose. As such, it is quite revealing of what was consensual about what was still contested about New Jew or the Native Israeli.

What was uncontested by both sides was the heroic and secular characters of Yosef Trumpeldor. Both agreed that a true Zionist does not retreat, abandoning the land he plowed and the buildings he constructed with his bare hands. Indeed, few days after the Battle of Tel Hai, Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinski, the founder of Revisionist Zionism, mourned “the men who knew no retreat.”<sup>245</sup> Self-defense and collective sacrifice for the sake of the nation were, and still are, key values that define Zionism. Trumpeldor’s last words express this ethos: “Never mind, it is good to die for our country.”<sup>246</sup> As such, the sacrifice of the New Hebrew fighter was transformed into voluntaristic and altruistic martyrdom.<sup>247</sup>

However, it is greatly contested whether Trumpeldor’s last battle had been fought in the name of an unwavering commitment to *settling* and *working* the land (the Socialist Zionists interpretation). Revisionists denied the significance of this interpretation in favor of their own, emphasising the “activist spirit of the defenders of Tel Hai, their strong sense of national mission”<sup>248</sup>. Jabotinski thus argued that fundamentally, the *halutz* is “neither a ‘landlord’ nor a peasant... neither a guard nor even a common worker.”<sup>249</sup> In other words, Revisionist sought confrontation with the Arabs whenever they could and saw in these battles an end in themselves (“offensive heroism”), while Socialist Zionist perceived this fighting as a means to an end (“defensive heroism”)<sup>250</sup>. Hence, for a brief moment, the plow and the gun appeared to be incompatible tools for the *halutzim*.

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<sup>244</sup> Zerubavel, “The Politics of Interpretation,” 141.

<sup>245</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>246</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 136.

<sup>247</sup> Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 40.

<sup>248</sup> Zerubavel, “The Politics of Interpretation,” 141.

<sup>249</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 143.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

In any case, what is of striking importance for our genealogy of the sabra is that the struggle was about whether fighting (killing and sacrificing oneself and the Other) was the main tenet of what constituted redemption or whether it was the through settling and plowing the land (an Arab-ridden land, to be more precise). Also, of interest here is the addition of another defining Other (enemy) in the creation of the Zionist self. While Revisionists openly adopted the figure of the Arab as the archenemy and antithesis of the New Jew, the Socialist Zionists – with their emphasis on “making the desert bloom” and settling – still held, in part, the exilic Jew as the Other. I say in part because already in the 1930s and 1940s (at the time of this political and ideological struggle) the Arab was also entering this Other’s role for them too. For instance, the Socialist Zionists likened the Revisionists’ obsession with guns and armed struggle to the Arabs, both “missing the moral strength that the plow bestows on its followers”<sup>251</sup> in order to discredit the political project of their opponents. In any case, the importance of *sacrifice* here stands out as a central tenet of the Zionist project and embodiment of the New Jew. There is indeed hardly any other culture for which funerals and especially memorials (*par excellence* expressions of the sacrificial logic<sup>252</sup>) take such an important place as in the Israeli culture.<sup>253</sup>

The second *aliya* of which the author Eliezer Smolly was from, is the most revered one for Israel’s early political elite (David Ben Gurion, Ytzak Ben-Zvi, and Moshe Sharett) and brought with it the influence of the European labour movement and communism. For instance, Zionism’s fascination for secularization and for Eastern European peasants<sup>254</sup> testify to the importance of communist and Marxist redemptive ideals in shaping the movement. Aleksander Ford’s film poster aesthetics also portray the sabra in the fashion of the 1930s Soviet/Communist aesthetics. *Moshavim* (pl. Hebrew of *moshav*, farming cooperatives) and more famously *kibbutzim* (pl. Hebrew of *kibbutz*, settlements where work and living were entirely communal) became the sites *par excellence* for the realization of the Zionist project and for one to become a true sabra. The youth of the cities who participated in the movements belonged to one of the “pioneer youth movements” which sent them during and after the *chagam* (later to become the

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>252</sup> On the sacrificial logic, see Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing.”

<sup>253</sup> Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 20.

<sup>254</sup> Zerubavel, “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and Jewish Past,” 122.

*gadna*, the premilitary excursions and formations during highschool) to settlements and outposts to farm and contribute to the communal and military life.<sup>255</sup>

The young Jewish men from the cities who did not join the movement were labeled as counterfeits and degenerates “who had not been educated properly or who had some sort of character failing.”<sup>256</sup> Those from the *kibbutzim* had their own *kibbutz brigades*.<sup>257</sup> Hence, Moshe Shamir, a famous Israeli writer and poet from the *sabra* generation and former *Palmach* member wrote: “There is nothing that unites us more than the feeling of responsibility to the generation. Above and beyond the hesitations of creativity and the trappings of modernism, the shades of independent personality, there beats within us a feeling of absolute belonging, one hundred percent, to the human revolution.”<sup>258</sup> Self-forgiveness thus took the form of a sacrifice for the nation and the land. In other words, the Zionist movement, in a now well known Marxist political move, “required total surrender of the individual to a utopian future and to the hope of a collective resurrection that, in turn, [(as we know today, with the “ethnic cleansing” that followed the 1948 war and even today’s Israel stance towards Iran)] required the destruction of everything that stood opposed to it,”<sup>259</sup> including the other forms of Jewish subjectivity.

A similar narrative is to be found in *Avenge But One of my Two Eyes* (*Nekam achat mishtey eynay*, 2005) where the Israeli film maker Avi Mograbi presents two myths that occupy a central role in the formation of the Israeli fundamental tropes such as victimhood and sacrifice, by playing on the symbol of the sacrifice for the nation, the *akeda*. First, the myth of “Samson the Hero”, who killed hundreds of Philistines during his adulthood and committed suicide in a temple in order to take with his, the lives of more Philistines than he killed in his entire life.<sup>260</sup> The other story playing a role in the symbol of the *akeda* is the myth of the fortress of the Masada, where Jewish zealots – after resisting a long siege against Roman army – preferred to kill their entire family during the night, and then commit suicide rather than being taken alive by

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<sup>255</sup> For a critical discussion on “*gadna*” in contemporary Israel, see Svirsky, *After Israel*, chap. 2.

<sup>256</sup> Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 21.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., xiii–xiv.

<sup>258</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>259</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 251.

<sup>260</sup> Heroes of the biblical past have since been cultivated by the successive Israeli governments. Kimmerling, “Between Hegemony and Dormant Kulturkampf in Israel,” 50.

their assailants. The Masada myth is particularly apposite to understand how a collective suicide is transformed into a “myth of fighting to the bitter ends and a symbol of national renewal.”<sup>261</sup> Still today, every Israeli soldier takes an oath at the fortress: “Masada shall not fall again.” Those two stories first provide the moral ground for Israeli soldiers to die defending the ‘nation’; Israeli existence and subjectivity is then perceived through the cultural stamp that sacrifice provides.<sup>262</sup> One telling example of how the sacrificial logic was integrated officially, even before statehood, is the *Palmach*’s “oath of the rifle” whereby the new recruits swear that “With this weapon, put in my hands by the Haganah organization in the Land of Israel, I will fight my people’s enemies for my homeland – without surrender, without being deterred, and with self-sacrifice.”<sup>263</sup>

Here, the tension between victimhood and sacrifice shines brightly. Achille Mbembe writes about the latter: “Embedded within this conception of politics as pain and sacrifice [is] an entrenched belief in the redemptive function of violence. As an offering of one’s life on the public altar of the revolution, violence could be expiatory or substitutive. It could also imply self-sacrifice – in which case the logic of sacrifice [is] linked with that of the gift.”<sup>264</sup> This logic sacrifice as one of the gift, linked with the redemptive function of violence, is best exemplified by the Israeli poem called *The Silver Platter* (*Magash Hakesef*, Nathan Alterman, December 1947). The poem is recited during the burial ceremonials of the Israeli fallen soldiers. It’s narrative – inspired by Israel’s first President Chaim Weizmann and leading figure of the Zionist movement declaration that “The state will not be given to the Jewish People on a silver platter” – is about “the sacrifice of young soldiers, whose life was the “silver platter” upon which the state was served.”<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, xviii; See also Ben-Yehuda, “The Masada Myth.”

<sup>262</sup> Weiss, “The Body of the Nation,” 2001, 54.

<sup>263</sup> As quoted in Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 48.

<sup>264</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 251.

<sup>265</sup> Weiss, “The Body of the Nation,” 2001, 55.

## The Sabra in Contemporary Israel and Zionist Cultural Governance

...to be a real Israeli is to be a soldier.<sup>266</sup>

Just as the African Marxist and nationalist critique ignored a “wide variety of African experiences of colonial conquest”<sup>267</sup>, the early European Zionists disavowed the wide variety of Jewish experiences through the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. To an important extent, even the Holocaust was ignored.<sup>268</sup> The Marxist-communist and nationalist inflections of early Zionism in *kibbutzim* (no private property, and nativist/redemptive myths/narrative akin to the ones in Africa during decolonization) tended to create a unified movement behind the labour movement (hence its domination, through the Mapai in the first decade after statehood). Yet, the first wave of immigration post-1948 was to a large extent composed of Jewish immigrants from Middle Eastern and North African countries. The latter came to threaten the Zionist narrative for they did not share the European experience nor the cultural background of their Zionist predecessors. As such, they were considered as second class Jews and were referred to by Israel’s first Prime Minister, Ben-Gurion, as “human dust” and by the Israeli politician Yitzhak Tabenkin as “non-existent”.<sup>269</sup> Close to a million of these “Arab-Jews” emigrated to Israel and almost overnight, a new Jewish ‘Other’ appeared in the socialscape of contemporary Israel: the “ethnic” Jew or *mizrahim* (pl. Hebrew of *mizrahi*, *mizra* means Orient).

The *sabra* found itself very quickly challenged by new immigrants who did not share the Zionist ideology and stigma, nor its Euro-historical background. These migrants’ relationship with the Middle Eastern and North African cultures had barely anything to do with the Zionist myths and narratives.<sup>270</sup> Eitan Bar-Yosef summarizes<sup>271</sup>:

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<sup>266</sup> Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 440.

<sup>267</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 262.

<sup>268</sup> Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*.

<sup>269</sup> Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 16.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 17; Kimmerling, “Between Hegemony and Dormant Kulturkampf in Israel,” 66.

<sup>271</sup> In her preface to the French translation of her oft-cited essay Zionism from the standpoint of its Jewish victims – originally published in *Social Text* – the Israeli born scholar Ella Shohat describes how her parents – Iraqi Jews who moved to Israel after its creation – brought their childhood world with them. As Iraqi Jews migrants in Israel, they were expected to consider their exile as a “going back home”. Yet, the Ashkenazi oriented Israeli society did nothing to

Described as primitive and lazy in the Israeli press of the late 1940s, the Jewish immigrants from North Africa were often referred to, simply, as “Africans”, decades later, *shartze khayes* (Yiddish for “black animals”) was still a common racist epithet employed by Ashkenazi Jews to denote their Mizrahi brethren. These rhetorical strategies, combined political and social subjugation, resulted in a gradual “bleaching” process: the presence of the newly arrived “black” Jewish immigrants from North Africa “whitened” the Eastern-European Jews – who, just a few decades earlier, were depicted as “black” by the acculturated Central-European Jews (who, in turn, were imagined as black by the dominant, non-Jewish European culture into which they were striving to assimilate). Mizrahi Jews would, in turn, whiten themselves by “blackening” the Israeli Palestinians.<sup>272</sup>

Upon their arrivals in Israel, Jewish immigrants of North African descent were sent – most often by force – to “development town” (*ayarat pi’tuah*) to populate and develop areas not yet inhabited by Jewish populations; areas that were often inhabited by Palestinians. In the last 20 years or so, it is the Jewish Ethiopian community that has come to replace the Mizrahim as subjects of racist planning policy. A current Israeli institutional residential policy “aims to direct Ethiopian migrants to ‘frontier’ neighborhoods, such as the ones that accommodate Arab residents, in order to control the demographic Jewish-Arab balance.”<sup>273</sup> These immigrants were and are still used as a buffer for the Ashkenazi population of the coastal areas.

Hence, to safeguard the Euro-colonial Zionist narration of the nation and resist its disintegration, the State engaged in various processes of cultural governance. On the other hand, for the Arab-Jews who were depicted as assimilable, it meant that they would end up being an economic<sup>274</sup> and tactical asset for the State. All the same, their Arabness had to be dealt with, it had to be cleansed: “at the time the Sephardi’s Oriental ‘difference’ threatens the European ideal-ego which phantasizes Israel as the prolongation of Europe ‘in’ the Middle East, but not

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make them feel this way. Instead, they turned towards apparently benign practices of everyday life to make themselves home. Her mom would do this by cooking the recipes her family cooked when they were living in Iraq. Her dad would play the Middle Eastern traditional “quarter tone music” with his kamanja (violin) and sing in Arabic. Both would keep listening to Oum Kalthoum and watch Egyptian movies on the satellite TV when living in New York and Israel. Shohat, *Le sionisme du point de vue de ses victimes juives*.

<sup>272</sup> Bar-Yosef, “Zionism, Apartheid, Blackface,” 121.

<sup>273</sup> Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, 11.

<sup>274</sup> In the words of David Ben-Gurion, “We need people who are born workers. ... The Oriental Jews’ standard of living and their needs are lower than the European workers.” As quoted in Alcalay, *After Jews And Arabs*, 43.



‘of’ it”.<sup>275</sup> Hence, the reaction of the *ashkenazim* vis-à-vis the idea of heterogeneity of Jewish cultures and the amalgam of “Jewishness” (seen as backwardness, opposed to the Westernization of Zionism) was an ideological impulse which manifested itself into policies that stripped Arab-Jews of their heritage.<sup>276</sup>

In the meantime, the non-Jewish indigenous and surrounding Arab populations had taken the relay of Nazi Germany with the 1948 independence war, and were absorbed into the role of “external demonized Other”.<sup>277</sup> For many European Jews, the new Jewish Others, the Arab-Jew and the Holocaust survivor, seemed to emerge from within the Arab “demonized” Other and the “Zionist discourse turned the concept of ‘Arab-Jew,’ into an antonym, an oxymoronic identity”.<sup>278</sup> Amongst other tools of cultural governance, the schooling system<sup>279</sup>, museum and archeological sites, and<sup>280</sup> literature<sup>281</sup> were central. Without a doubt, one of the most effective tools for inculcating the new political identity into the Arab-Jews and break the hyphen was Eichmann’s trial.<sup>282</sup> According to Hannah Arendt, “The trial was supposed to show [Oriental Jews] what it meant to live among non-Jews, to convince them that only in Israel could a Jew be safe and live an honorable life”.<sup>283</sup> It is worth quoting at length another passage from her book written as she covered the event for *The New Yorker* (the quotations she uses are Ben-Gurion’s):

Thus, the trial never became a play, but the show Ben-Gurion had had in mind to begin with did take place, or, rather, the “lessons” he thought should be taught to Jews and Gentiles, to Israelis and Arabs, in short, to the whole world. [...] The Jews in the Diaspora were to remember how Judaism, “four thousands year old, with its spiritual creation and its ethical strivings, its Messianic aspirations,” had always faced a “hostile world”, how the Jews had degenerated until they went to their death like sheep, and how only the establishment of a Jewish state had enabled Jews to hit back, as Israelis had done in the War of Independence, in the Suez adventure and in the almost daily incidents on Israel’s unhappy borders. And if the Jews outside Israel had to be shown the difference between Israeli heroism and the Jewish submissive meekness, there was a lesson for those inside

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<sup>275</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 188; also 217.

<sup>276</sup> Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel.”

<sup>277</sup> Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 18.

<sup>278</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 255.

<sup>279</sup> Svirsky, *After Israel*; See also Almog, *The Sabra the Creation of the New Jew*, 24–34.

<sup>280</sup> Azoulay, *With Open Doors*.

<sup>281</sup> Hever, “Territoriality and Otherness in Hebrew Literature of the War of Independence.”

<sup>282</sup> Esler, “The Nazi Trial That Shaped Israel.”

<sup>283</sup> Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 8.

Israel too: “the generation of Israelis who have grown up since the holocaust” were in danger of losing their ties with the Jewish people and, by implication with their own history. “It is necessary that our youth remember what happened to the Jewish people. We want them to know the most tragic facts in our history”.<sup>284</sup>

Hence, with the trial, the identity of the victim was passed on to all Israelis, regardless of their origins or past. The Arab/Palestinian was cast as the new Nazi,<sup>285</sup> this “desirable enemy” so central to the societal and political engineering (*mamlachtiyut*) that could force the Arab-Jews to shed their “backward” traditions and merge into the Euro-modernity with the Ashkenazim.

Just before Arab defeat of 1967, the Israeli-Palestinians, whom had been under the martial law since the creation of the State, were allowed civic rights (1966) (even though they remain victims of racism until today) and a few years later, after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, *mizrahim* formed a majority of the Israeli-Jewish population.<sup>286</sup> The external “Arab threat” to survival quelled, the “Oriental Jews” started demanding for political and economic liberalization. The Israeli State responded positively, which led to the formation of new political parties such as the Likud, which was created in 1973 (as an alliance), and took power for the first time in 1977. This shift of power on the political spectrum reflected the disenchantment – in part caused by the near defeat during the 1973 war – of the *ashkenazim sabras* with Labor leftist ideology without really departing from the core Zionist assumptions, political *doxa* and entrenched euro-colonial structures of power within society.<sup>287</sup> In front of the rising political power of the *mizrahim*, the “evil” Palestinian/Arab came to fill the gap the diasporic European Jew had played for the early Zionists; any character associated with an Arab became a sign of weakness, backwardness, and ultimately, non-Israeliness. As Khazzoom puts it:

Just as German Jews had reacted to cultural insecurity by orientalizing East European Jews, so many westernizing Middle Eastern Jews became invested in discursive and symbolic separation from their own Oriental other, Moslem Arabs. Over time, these groups developed identities in which, at the most extreme, Jewishness meant non-Arabness.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>286</sup> Kook, “Between Uniqueness and Exclusion,” 202.

<sup>287</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 210.

<sup>288</sup> Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism,” 498; Moreover, by the mid to late 1990s - after the absorption of the large influx of East Europeans migrants - Israel essentially became a non-Arab state (as its bureaucratic/societal identity). See Lustick, “Israel as a Non-Arab State.”

Hence, the consolidated Israeli Zionist *sabra* identity of the first two decades became challenged by the ethnic Jewish Other (*mizrahim*) and the alien (Arab, non-Jewish) Other who threatened the Jewish-Israeli from both, outside (mostly Palestinians in the Occupied Territories) and inside (Israeli-Palestinians).<sup>289</sup> With the securing of the borders and the occupation, later on with signing of the peace accords with Egypt, and even more so with the debacle of the 1982 war in Lebanon, the Israeli society saw the rising polarization and collapse of national consensus.<sup>290</sup> The expansion of the territory had merely expanded the dimensions without changing the nature of Israel's fundamental ontological dilemmas.<sup>291</sup> The only intact tenet left unchallenged of the Zionist *sabra* identity was the Israeli culture of victimhood and the logic of sacrifice.<sup>292</sup> From this episode on, the Zionist "monolithic" identity faces a process of disintegration, which accelerates as internal contradictions – such as multiples ethnicities, histories, non-Jewish migrants, and roles attached to gender and religion, and especially Israel's shift from a socialist ethos to a (neo)liberal market economy – surface within the society.<sup>293</sup> This disintegration has been reflected in the deterioration of the *sabra* ethos and what is commonly referred to in Israel as the "crisis of values" in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>294</sup>

## Conclusion

*Let's just say there's a problem as soon as a Reform Jew stops following the religion of Israel. I can't allow myself to say that such a person is a Jew.*

- Religious Services Minister David Azoulay, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2015

Departing from the years of European Enlightenment and working its way to contemporary Israel, this chapter has engaged a brief genealogy of the *sabra*, the ideal-type that organizes and

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<sup>289</sup> Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 51.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>291</sup> In this regard, Ella Shohat writes : "The 'opening up of the borders,' far from indefinitely pushing the Palestinians off the stage of history, meanwhile, left Israel as haunted as ever by the Palestinian presence, revealing in clearer contours what had always been the root of the Israeli-Arab conflict", Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 213.

<sup>292</sup> Bar-On, "The Silence of Psychologists," 342.

<sup>293</sup> Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 9; Aronoff and Aronoff, "Explaining Domestic Influences on Current Foreign Policy," 86, 95; Lustick, "Israel as a Non-Arab State."

<sup>294</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 210–11; Kimmerling, "Between Hegemony and Dormant Kulturkampf in Israel," 53; Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates*, 189.

dominates Israel's political imaginary. The aim was to highlight the various tensions, violences and ambiguities that structure this ideal-type, thus also pointing to the need to police it through – often violent – tools of cultural governance. Ultimately, the struggle for the creation and defense of the sabra is about what defines Israeli-Jewishness today. Part of the argument I want to make here is that contemporary Israel still (re)produces the Western Eurocentric colonial nationalist model of sovereignty which, it is said, brings with it the redemption and rejuvenation of the nation. It is thus about the re-inscription and territorialization of an heterogeneous set of beliefs and practices in a intellectual genealogy founded on the territorialization of identity and the racialization of geography.<sup>295</sup> As such, contemporary Israel adopts the settler colonial modalities that perpetuate an astonishing level of violence at various levels of society, from the family to the military institutions, passing by the schooling system.

In the last thirty years or so, with the growth of the right-wing ultra-nationalists ideologies and political parties, many concerned Israeli scholars (called “the revisionists” or “new historians”) felt the need to reopen the books of those national stories and they produced historical, political, and sociological scholarships that contest conventional Zionist interpretations about Israeli identity, politics, and society. Their works deconstruct epistemological models of Jewish and Arab subjects and challenge the ethnographic ‘knowledge’ that allows one to talk about ‘Nation of Zion’ or the myth of *the* Jewish people and its correlate colonial geographic imaginary or moral and violent geography.<sup>296</sup> In sum, their work has been useful to challenge Israel's Western violent cartography. That said, it appears that following the decline of the sabra's narrative popularity during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ideal type has made a comeback and still is the organizing referent of the Israel's dominant axiomatic.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 139.

<sup>296</sup> For instance, see Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*; Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*; Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*; Kimmerling, *The Israeli State and Society*; Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness State, Society, and the Military*; Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory*; Rose, *The Question of Zion*; Rose, *Proust among the Nations*; Rose, *The Last Resistance*; Butler, *Parting Ways*.

<sup>297</sup> Sela-Sheffy, “‘What Makes One an Israeli?’”; At a more eugenistic and body aesthetic level, this is also true. “Although veteran Ashkenazi Israeli carriers of the white Western image of the Tsabar have lost much of their power, primordial images which were set up by this group, are

To this day, in 2016, it seems like the tensions, ambiguities, contradictions that structure Israel's Western colonial narratives and ethos as well as the violence implicated in policing these tensions have yet to be addressed seriously for the purpose of starting to understand the astonishing level of violence in everyday life of Israel-Palestine. For instance, there is an increasingly popular discourse held by Israelis about a cultural "war" between the secular Israelis (inheritents of the sabras) and the increasingly numerous religious Orthodox Israeli-Jews.<sup>298</sup> The same applies for a conflict dividing a liberal-secular Ashkenazim minority and a minority of "extremist" settlers. Increasingly, the only thing that seems to hold Israelis from various religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds seems to be the common hatred of the Palestinians indigenous population and other non-Jewish minorities. The portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinians as inassimilable and thus excludable from the Israeli society reflected in the domestic "anxiety-driven" policy-making such as the recent "loyalty law" or even deportation, which is advocated by a former Israeli foreign minister.

In the end, and in light of this chapter, it seems that (and here I paraphrase Achille Mbembe on postcolonial Africa) as long as Jewish-Israelis neglect to rethink the long history of European colonialism and violence of their brethren and ancestors – a product of history in which they are not *only* the victims, but also in which they have played an active part in shaping, like Disraeli, – "the appeal to race as a moral and political basis of solidarity will depend, to some extent, on a mirage of consciousness"<sup>299</sup> and the demand that Israel's daughters and sons be ready to sacrifice themselves and others in the name of freedom and survival will continue to dictate their mode of being in the world.<sup>300</sup>

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apparently still hegemonic. Furthermore, the politics of appearance and beauty have to do with the 'naturalization' of hegemony, in our case that of the dominant Ashkenazi man." in Birenbaum-Carmeli and Carmeli, "Physiognomy, Familism and Consumerism," 28.

<sup>298</sup> Gorenberg, "Israel's Other Occupation."

<sup>299</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, "African Modes of Self-Writing," 260.

<sup>300</sup> Mbembe, "Faces of Freedom," 298.

## Chapter 2: The Barracked Jewish Body, Shmoks, and Modernity's Phallus

*Historians have never been interested in what has really happened to human bodies—what bodies have felt. Yet until we have succeeded in reconstructing the development of our bodies in history, we will remain strangers to ourselves—confined to a haunted, enchanted, subjugated nature, unable to experience other bodies as equals, incapable of the physical (more than simply sexual) experience of communism. [...] As pathways to the experiencing and knowledge of the true fate of the European body, of its splitting into child and adult, into genders, classes, and fragments of itself, those detours through human bodies still need to be explored. Until we have done that, we can't really claim to understand the history of the people of Europe.*<sup>301</sup>

*[N]othing in man - not even his body - is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men.*<sup>302</sup>

### Introduction

*[...] the male body came in the course of these developments to be isolated from, set off against, and exalted above the female body, until as Faust the Colonizer it stood (active or merely watching) above an ocean waiting to be drained, and finally, as the fascist male, became a rock amid the raging sea (defending) or one of Jünger's men-of-steel (destroying) in the intoxicating whirlpool of reality. At this point, the mingling of human bodies became an unresolvable dilemma.*<sup>303</sup>

In Chapter 1, I have explored how the anti-semitic discourse in Europe articulated two important discourses on the Jews. The first is akin to colonial and settler colonial projects and denies the indigenous or 'native' populations the ability to rule themselves. This inability is inspired by a mythical past (often presented as historical and ethnographic knowledge) that would prove the constant failures of these populations to achieve the standards of the 'civilized world'; a "violence with regard to the past" of the colonized "that is emptied of all substance".<sup>304</sup> The standards are said to constitute the precondition for autodetermination and sovereignty. These forms of 'scientific' knowledge legitimized the genocide<sup>305</sup> and the *mission civilisatrice* amongst other colonial forms of violence.

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<sup>301</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 362–363.

<sup>302</sup> Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, 87–88.

<sup>303</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, 362.

<sup>304</sup> Frantz Fanon, as quoted in French in Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 238. (my translation).

<sup>305</sup> For a study of this model, see the study of the Valladolid debate in Todorov, *La Conquête de l'Amérique*.

A mix of cultural education and reformation (*Bildung*) and social improvement (*Verbesserung*) was the solution for the Reformists and Zionists to enter the realm of Western modern ‘civilized’ world. As we have noted in the previous chapter, heeding Mbembe, it is even more apposite to speak of a *conversion* (an act that always implies a form of violence) for the European Jews adopted widely accepted and shared ontological premises of the time; the language and grammar of the Trinity that is territory/nation/state.<sup>306</sup> This conversion to Modernity’s Trinity for Jews, like many other colonized people, meant the destruction of a former Jewish world, order, or way of being in the world, and brought “fundamental change in modes of thought and conduct” on their part.<sup>307</sup> Moreover, Zionism, as one expression of redemptive movements and discourses also mixed with the European discourse on *self-government* (traditional understanding of sovereignty) the more ancient problematic of *divine sovereignty*, or, as Achilles Mbembe calls it: “omnipotence [...] liberation from time”.<sup>308</sup> At stake here was the liberation from a history that was read as a series of catastrophes responsible for the lost sovereignty of the Jewish people during exile (*galut*) and its framing in the fashionable medical/social Darwinism discourses of the time, of so-called “degeneracy” (*Entartung*).

This brings us to the second component of this modern racist antisemitic discourse. This second component is also the result of the colonial and settler colonial projects and the medical/eugenic discourses about the body of these ‘savage’ and ‘exotic’ populations; yet, with a specific twist and literature proper to the European Jewish case. We speak here of the specific features of the antisemite representation of the Jewish body that included “scrawny, weak [bodies, ...], small statures, large noses, and bulky feet.”<sup>309</sup> In short, antisemitism articulates a specific discourse about the ontology of the Jewish *body* and embodiment: a *teratological*

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<sup>306</sup> See especially Mbembe’s discussion on conversion (entitled “Erotics of Alterity”) in Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 227–231.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>309</sup> Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 270–72; See also Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*.

discourse about the Jewish body that was said to have degenerated through the centuries of exile into a *monster*, a surviving aberration in the European history of evolution and progress.<sup>310</sup>

It is Judith Butler who noted that “law is not literally internalized, but incorporated on bodies; there the law is manifest as a sign of the essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire. In effect, the law is fully dissimulated into the body as such; it is the principle that confers intelligibility on that body, the sign by which it is socially known.”<sup>311</sup> Hence, if the preceding chapter pointed out the importance of Modernity’s lawlike discourse(s) on the Third Estate (nation) and its correlatives space (territory) and institutions (state), this chapter seeks to present how the body served as an important vehicle of colonialism; a contested political site. Here it is apposite to recall Achille Mbembe’s point that “it is the centrality of the body in the calculus of political subjection that explains the importance assumed, in the course of the nineteenth century, by theories of the physical, moral, and political regeneration of black and, later on, Jews.”<sup>312</sup> That is, both components – the discourse about the inability to govern themselves and the discourse about the Jewish body – rely on each other; they are intertwined.<sup>313</sup> So much so, that conversion here literally becomes for the converts a “stripping down to the skin”<sup>314</sup> so as to witness the monstrosity of one own’s body and then refashion it through various techniques of self-fashioning, following the particular “eugenic model nativist citizenship”<sup>315</sup> policing the bodies allowed to be part of the body politic.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> As Foucault noted, “the monster ensures the emergence of difference. This difference is still without law and without any well-defined structure; the monster is the root-stock of specification, but it is only a sub-species itself in the stubbornly slow stream of history. [...] the monster provides an account, as though in caricature, of the genesis of differences, [...]” Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 171.

<sup>311</sup> Butler, “Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions,” 605.

<sup>312</sup> Mbembe and Rendall, “African Modes of Self-Writing,” 246.

<sup>313</sup> See also Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 59.

<sup>314</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 228.

<sup>315</sup> Opondo, “Philopoesis And/as Resistance.”

<sup>316</sup> Mbembe writes elsewhere: “The litigation concerning the part of humanity of the ‘tiers’, such is in last resort the matter of colonial racism. The first object of the fixation of this dispute is the body. According to Fanon, the apparition of the tiers in the field of racism is carried out first under the form of a body. Around this body, ‘reigns an atmosphere of certain uncertainty’. Very quickly, the body becomes a weight – the weight of a ‘curse,’ one that makes it the simulacra of nothingness and precarity. Before even appearing, this body as already been put on trial [...] The body is also apparently a formless form that arouses surprise, dread, and terror...” Mbembe,



The reason for turning to the site of the Israeli Jewish body in this chapter is manifold. First, it is a matter of underlining the enduring importance of modernity in Jewish and Israeli self-aestheticization and the Zionist settler colonial project. My point is that not only that the *fin du siècle* modernity emancipatory ideals still are actual, but also, that Israel's contemporary condition can tell us something about modernity's and the Enlightenment's philosophical, cultural, and political legacy. Insofar as these modern muscular body and masculinity ideals have served as emancipatory tools for Zionists and ultimately forged Israel's malestream identity, they also have come to define the "mode of being-Jewish-in-the-world, one which is characterized by toughness, aggressiveness, and battle-readiness."<sup>317</sup> They have captured and shaped the barracked Jewish body.

Barracked here is purposefully used with a double-entendre. In its English literal meaning, the word refers to the body or the individual who dwells in the barrack, or other form of military encampment. In French, the term "baraqué" can be translated as somebody who is hefty or muscular, wide-shouldered. I thus use the term with these two meanings in mind. In sum, I hope to think about how the conversion of a Jewish mode of being in the world and the capture of the Jewish war machine by the European state apparatus passed inexorably by the body; by their investing it, marking it, training it, torturing it, "forcing it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs."<sup>318</sup> It shows how shaping a particular Zionist body was a central piece in Israel's moral and violent cartography.

Secondly, turning to the body is also a way to displace and pluralize the site of conflict. If we shift our view from a geopolitical/geographical frame to one focused on corporeal elements, we are in better position to grasp the idea that what today is called the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict" is actually the effect of body/embodiment politics (amongst others) that started long time before Israel's statehood. Indeed, as Haim Yacobi notes, the Zionist settler-colonial moral geography "laid the ground for Europeans to construct the logic of justification for the colonial

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*Critique de la raison nègre*, 164. My own translation from French. In this citation, Mbembe is citing Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks*).

<sup>317</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, xvii.

<sup>318</sup> Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, 25.

project. Thus, signifying space and signifying the native body became simultaneous processes. Not only did territory frame the ‘biological nature’ of the native body, but also the body itself became a signifier of space.”<sup>319</sup>

Finally, turning to the body is also a matter of showing the deeply bio-political origins of “the conflict”. One cannot avoid mentioning and highlighting the fact that “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” is, in part, the effect of the complex dynamics of bio-power that are closely associated with modernity’s phallogentric discourses on eugenics, race, hygiene, body fitness (*freikörperkultur*), militarism, masculinity, and colonialism.<sup>320</sup> Briefly what Michel Foucault argued, in his *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality* is that the two poles of bio-power – 1) the disciplining of individual bodies into a science or “an anatomo-politics of the human body” and 2) a focus on “species body” (or “population”) came with the monitoring, modulation, regulation and ultimately control of the health of the latter – are intimately related with state power. In sum, the disciplining of individual bodies (especially through military drill or dressage for instance) and the regulation of a body politic are intimately linked through the deployment of sexuality as a form of state power.<sup>321</sup> It is with this theory in mind that I read various works on the history/genealogy of “the Jewish body”, in order to achieve a critical reading of the present.

### **A (Very) Short Genealogy of the Jewish Body: Between European Estrangement and Self-Fashioning**

*I thought that what I had in hand was to construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations [but it was] the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.*<sup>322</sup>

The characteristics of the degenerated Jewish body were, according to antisemites, intimately linked with the parasitic nature of the European Jews who, it was said, did not perform any manual labour or intensive work. Above all, nationalism expresses itself in an attitude of the

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<sup>319</sup> Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, 3.; See also Shapiro, “Moral Geographies and the Ethics of Post-Sovereignty.”

<sup>320</sup> Mbembe identifies the “racialist, nationalist, militarist ethos” as the constitutive elements of the colonial enterprise. In Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 98. my translation.

<sup>321</sup> Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1.

<sup>322</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks - New Edition*, 84.

body.<sup>323</sup> The intimacy between the body and nation building in the context of European anti-semitism is well expressed in Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Foundation of the Nineteenth Century*, where he writes that Jews

were so unwarlike, such unreliable soldiers that their king had to trust his protection and the protection of their land to foreign troops; they were so unwilling to undertake any endeavor that just looking at the ocean... horrified them; they were so slothful that for every task at hand one had to hire designers, production managers, and even handworkers from neighboring countries for all the delicate work; they were so unfit for agriculture that [...] the Canaanites were not just their teachers but were the only ones up until the end who worked the land; yes even in a purely political respect, they were such opponents of all stable, well-ordered conditions that no rational form of government could come about by them and they felt best from early on under the pressure of foreign rule, something that did not prevent them, however, from burrowing underneath it.<sup>324</sup>

This racist conceptualization of Jews as unable to perform any manual or labor intensive task due to their degenerated bodies was identified with effeminacy. Indeed, it was also closely linked, in some instances, with deviant sexual practices (that is deviating from the heterosexual/endogamous norm) such as homosexuality and transexuality; “deviances” that, in medical terms, fail to reproduce the healthy body of the nation. As Arendt noted, the secularized Jews of France and Germany were welcomed in the salons of the bourgeoisie insofar as they sat next to the “inverts”; their place was amongst the deviants. Otto Weininger's anti-Semitic (self-hating) and homophobic diatribe renders the connection explicit. In his *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character) published in 1903 he wrote:

Zionism is the negation of Judaism, for the conception of Judaism involves the world-wide distribution of the Jews. Citizenship is an un-Jewish thing, and there has never been and never will be a true Jewish State. The State involves the aggregation of individual aims, the formation of and obedience to self-imposed laws; and the symbol of the State, if nothing more, is its head chosen by free election. ... The true conception of the State is foreign to the Jew because he, *like the woman*, is wanting in personality; his failure to grasp the idea of true society is due to his lack of a free intelligible ego.<sup>325</sup>

Weininger, like many of his contemporaries, co-opted Chamberlain's discourse on Jewish inferiority and considered the Jew to be “a spreading parasite, straggling all over the earth and finding true root nowhere, . . . [able] to adapt himself to every circumstance and every race, becoming, like the parasite, a new creature in every different host, although remaining essentially

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<sup>323</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 84.

<sup>324</sup> As quoted in Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 274.

<sup>325</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 293, fn. 11.

the same, [...]”<sup>326</sup> Hence, Jews were depicted literally and metaphorically as *unfit* for nation building. Their bodies (in the anti-semitic discourse) were the reflection of their sexual practices associated with effeminacy and degeneracy of the race and the body politic. In turn, the absence of a ‘modern,’ ‘civilized’, Jewish nation-state appeared as the proof of this “degeneracy”.

The capture of the Jewish body within modernity’s locus and economy of races was achieved with the help of reformists and Zionists. Both groups adopted discourses, actions, and modes of embodiment that would resolve the problem of “degeneration” (*Entartung*).<sup>327</sup> Walter Rathenau, the German Jewish politician, founder of the German Democratic party, and strong proponent of Reform Judaism declared in 1897: “Look at yourselves in the mirror! [...] As soon as you have recognized your unathletic build, your narrow shoulders, your clumsy feet, your sloppy roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the renewal of your outer appearance.”<sup>328</sup> As pointed out by Arendt, the birth of the discipline of eugenics in the mid 1850s added a “scientific” layer to the racial theories of the antisemites and orientalist of the time. Hence, even for Reformist and Zionists alike, regulating degeneracy of one own “race” became “an urgent racial-sexual imperative.”<sup>329</sup>

It is in this context of rising popularity of Zionism that Max Nordau, in his opening speech at the Second Zionist World Congress in Basel on August 28<sup>th</sup> 1898, proffered publicly for the first time the concept of the “muscle Jew”.<sup>330</sup> Indeed, as Todd Samuel Presner noted,

Nordau’s invention of the muscle Jew cannot be adequately understood apart from the paradoxical condensation of multiple discourses concerning the politics of regeneracy and

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<sup>326</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, 281 The quote is from his “Sex and Character.”

<sup>327</sup> I purposefully use the one word selected by the Jewish Reformist (and later Zionist) Max Nordau for the title of his book. Nordau, *Degeneration*; According to Todd Samuel Presner, “The German verb *entarten* (‘to degenerate’) means *aus der Art schlagen*, approximately, ‘to be untrue to form or kind [Art].’ It implies a process of withdrawal (*ent-arten*) or movement away from an ideal or, at least, normative type. In English and French, the word degenerate (from the Latin *degeneratus*) also contains the idea of a debased movement away from a norm while implying the idea of a ‘natural’ form, namely a ‘race’ or genus. Thus, to be degenerate means ‘to deviate from one’s race or kind.’” Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 277.

<sup>328</sup> As quoted in Khazzoom, “The Great Chain of Orientalism,” 493.

<sup>329</sup> Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 276.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

the deployment of sexuality for the purpose of nation formation. [...] the muscle Jew as a discursive formation, one that both emerged from Nordau's aesthetic reflections on regeneration and lived on in a range of discourses that extended and justified the corporeal politics of German Zionism.<sup>331</sup>

This "muscle Jew" was to be the opposite of feminine European Jew. These new Jews were going to "[b]e once again men with strong chests, steady limbs, sharp-eyed."<sup>332</sup> This understanding of Jewishness was thus characteristically phallic, or, in feminist jargon, "malestreamed".

Moreover, Nordau argued that German (and European Jews) were "missing corporeal upbringing". Nordau's thought, imbued with Social Darwinism argued that European Jewry was at the dawn of an evolutionary break whereby "degenerates" would be 'naturally' eliminated and only the strong and disciplined would survive as modern subjects.<sup>333</sup> These degenerates could already be recognized by their race-based bodily deformities ("asymmetric skull", "Mongolian face") and their irrational behavior and expressions.<sup>334</sup> Herzl adopted a similar attitude towards Yiddish speakers and non-reformed central European Jews for instance, although he seemed more skeptical than Nordau about their capacity for "reformation" and conversion to Modernity's imperatives.<sup>335</sup>

The in-house physician of the first Hebrew school in Tel Aviv (Herzliya Gymnasium), Dr. Binyamini wrote in 1928 that "Zionism was accepted only by compatible men and women who were whole-bodied and physically fit. ... Our people are currently experiencing a natural process of selection." Few years later (1934), the head of the Israeli Office of the World Zionist Organization was writing that "while in Europe, many are calling for a eugenic policy, the Jews ... have never engaged in a 'self-cleansing' of their race, but rather allowed every child, be it

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>332</sup> As quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 98.

<sup>333</sup> Presner, "Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles," 276.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>335</sup> As Todd E. Presner notes "Perhaps most disturbingly, we might mention Theodor Herzl's infamous article, 'Mauschel' (1898), in which he castigates the hapless, Yiddish-speaking Eastern Jew as 'something unspeakably low and repugnant' (*etwas unsagbar Niedriges und Widerwärtiges*) and even advocates the symbolic shooting of an arrow through the chest of the Eastern Jew as a Zionist gesture of national rejuvenation. The article is reprinted in *Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 1934), 209–15; here, 210." Ibid., 295, endnote #32.

most sickly, to grow and marry and have children like him. Even the mentally retarded, blind and deaf were allowed to marry. In order to keep the purity of the race, such Jews must abstain from child-bearing.”<sup>336</sup> European-Jewish appropriation of the eugenic European discourse and phantasms about a ‘pure race’ were institutionalized in the pre-Statehood (*Yishuv*) Israeli institutions that would shape the society to come.

If diasporic life had destroyed the Jewish body, an entire reformation of bodily activities such as gymnastics, bodybuilding, jogging, and hiking, it was thought, could bring the Jews to the right path of rejuvenation.<sup>337</sup> Gymnastics was indeed specifically identified as central for the well being of the Jewish race. As Presner writes, paraphrasing Nordau,

In the cramped quarters of the Jewish ghetto streets, Jews forgot how to move their limbs freely; in dark houses, their eyes blinked nervously; out of fear of persecution, their formerly strident voices turned to mere whispers. As a redemptive figure, then, the muscle Jew represents both a future ideal and the return to a heroic Jewish tradition characterized by the likes of Bar Kochba and the Maccabees. In his rally cry for a “muscle Jewry,” Nordau proudly asserts that Zionists are rejoining “our oldest traditions by becoming strong-chested, tautly jointed, boldly gazing men [*tiefbrüstige, strammgliedrige, kühnblickende Männer*]<sup>338</sup>

As argued previously, this German Zionism was deeply influenced by central Europe’s nationalist tribalism and its German form, Germanism.<sup>339</sup> The latter was itself greatly influenced by Hellenism, and the cult and aesthetics of the (muscular) body that the Greeks maintained and represented in Greek visual arts (such as sculpture for instance). This return to the Hellenic past was for the rising German nationalism a way to establish a legitimacy of its project for a present and future Germany in the context where the latter had actually very shallow historical roots. Similarly, one can interpret Max Nordau’s oft-cited phrase that “We shall therefore renew connection with our ancient tradition: We will again be broad-chested, vigorous and fearless men”<sup>340</sup> as a the desire to (re)build a mythical body that has its corollary space (Historical

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<sup>336</sup> Both citation are as quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 2.

<sup>337</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 282.

<sup>338</sup> Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 282.

<sup>339</sup> One may think of Victor Klemperer’s – a Jew who survived the war while in Germany – lament that what was most threatened during this time was his “Germaness”, his “Duetschtum”. I want to thank Michael J. Shapiro for bringing this point to my attention.

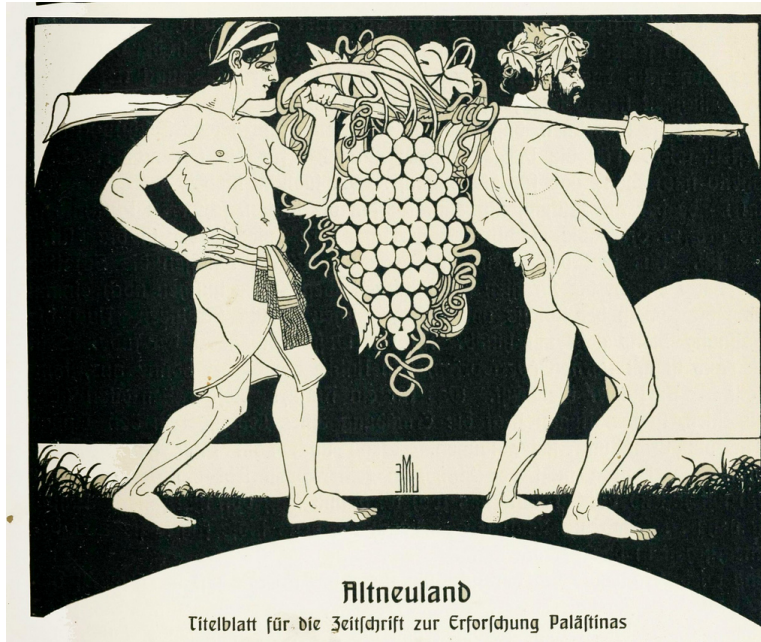
<sup>340</sup> As quoted in Bar-On, *The Others Within Us*, 15.

Palestine) and time (Ancient Biblical Hebrews) and thus give legitimacy to the Zionist national project.

Hence, German Zionist and Reformists followed in the same direction, and the aesthetics of rejuvenation these thinkers articulated portrayed the reformed Jew as “a soldier of regeneration” whose Jewish heritage was in line with the ancient Greek grandiose history. Indeed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the sabra (or New Jew) was to be, before anything else, defined as a *warrior*. In a speech to Jewish college students given in 1899, Nordau argued that “Zionist Jews—as masculine fighters—would now re-embody the heroic, martial tradition of the , [...] ‘For to be a Zionist means to be doubly and triply a fighter.’ Through ‘manly discipline’ [*Mannszucht*] and military dominance, Nordau imagined Zionism as an ideology of the Jew-Greek warrior.”<sup>341</sup> On the cover of the first edition of the German Zionist journal sporting the same name as Herzl’s novel, *Altneuland*, one found E. M. Lilien’s drawing depicting two muscled Jews, recalling the Hellenic body culture tradition, holding a rod where an abundance of grapes hangs, in a *Shavuot* (festival of the first fruits) fashion. Already, strong and rejuvenated bodies seemed to be associated with the rejuvenation of the land (“making the desert bloom”) and the generosity of the soil in the land of “milk and honey.”

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<sup>341</sup> Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 282 The inquotes are Max Nordau’s, from a reprint of his speech “Heloten und Spartaner” (1899); in *Zionistische Schriften*. As Eyal Ben-Ari points out, “[t]he combat schema is also a schema for achieving and reaffirming manhood. Being able to act as a soldier in battles encapsulates the notion of a man mastering a stressful situation, and, if successful, of passing the test.” in Ben-Ari, *Mastering Soldiers*, 112–113.



**Figure 3: E. M. Lilien's cover of the first issue of *Altneuland* (journal).**<sup>342</sup>

At a minimum then, in these instances, Nordau and other Zionist early thinkers appropriated the European colonial phallic and anti-Semitic discourse as well as the diagnosis of racial degeneracy and incorporated it in Reform and Zionist thinking and modes of self-fashioning. For instance, in “The Tasks of Zionism” published in 1898, not long after the Second World Zionist Congress, Nordau argued that Zionism had the two fundamental goals of (1) “conquering” Palestine for the Jewish people and (2) of “preparing” the Jewish people for Palestine. Obviously, the second was a precondition for the first, and implied a reformation of the ontological premises of the European Jews, urging them to think of themselves as a “people” [*Volk*], and the reformation of their bodies through manly discipline [*Maanszucht*].

As seen in the introduction of the previous chapter, Herzl's *Altneuland* is ultimately about a young Jew (Loewenberg) reforming his frail body through a settler-colonial project in the South Seas, and, once reformed, moving to Palestine (thus achieving Statehood in the promised land). Max Nordau held a similar view: “the Galut made a chaos out of us [Jews],” by erasing the

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<sup>342</sup> It is Todd Samuel Presner's article that attracted my attention to this drawing. Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 271.



“organic coherence” and “unity” that the ancient Hebrews had established<sup>343</sup>: “In order to ‘become, once again, a fully entitled citizen [*Bürger*] of his own people’, the Jew had to reform his body and behavior patterns in accordance with the standards of bourgeois civil society.”<sup>344</sup> Here again, the ancient Greeks and their culture of body building and self-fashioning inspired German nationalists, who themselves influenced Zionists and Revisionists alike. German body culture was thus also adopted by German Jews, and took the form a form of an ethics, like Loewernberg on his desert island, of reforming one’s own body *before* moving to Palestine. Like Spartans, the new Hebrew state’s males would dedicate their life to their bodies and fighting.

Hence, German Jews were founding their own gymnastics associations, like the Bar Kochba, the Blau-Weiss, their own gymnasium (*Wanderklubs*), and their own journal: *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* was founded in Berlin in May 1900 as “the official organ of the Jewish gymnastics association.”<sup>345</sup> The journal’s articles were often a mix of aesthetic, therapeutic, eugenic and colonial discourses; discourses that reflected an investment in the modern biopolitics of regeneration.<sup>346</sup> Todd Samuel Presner describes the purpose and content and the later is quite telling and it is worth quoting at length for it highlights the multiple discourses (Darwinism, medical, science, race) that shaped Zionism:

its purpose was to realize Jewish national goals through corporeal means. Over its twenty years, the journal published an array of materials, ranging from historical discussions of ancient Jewish greatness to battle songs, fitness programs, schedules and results of various gymnastics competitions, photographs of exemplary muscle Jews, and medical discussions of the benefits of sun, light, and movement for a potent sexuality. A leitmotiv that ran throughout the journal was the “physical improvement” of the Eastern European Jew, so often pejoratively characterized as the *Jammergeschlecht* (wretched race), with a hunchedover body, crooked posture, awkward gait, underdeveloped musculature, and nervous disposition. Pictures of strong Jewish gymnasts with upright postures, elegant movements, developed muscles, and assured confidence were not only meant to provide inspiration and reclaim an ancient, heroic ideal; the bodies they depicted were also hailed as the preconditions of a successful project of nation building. In its first edition, the journal proclaimed five goals: the creation of a strong Jewish body, the creation of a strong

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<sup>343</sup> Quotes are from Max Nordau, “*Die Aufgaben des Zionismus*” (1898); reprinted in *Zionistische Schriften*, translated in Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 281.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 281–82.

<sup>345</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 283.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Jewish community, the reinvigoration of old Jewish ideals of heroism, the fighting of anti-Semitism, and the cultivation of a national feeling. It is no coincidence that, as the primary means of staving off what Herzl once called “the family affliction” of Jewish degeneracy, Jewish athletic and gymnastic associations sprang up simultaneously with Zionism throughout many German-speaking cities. In 1903, five years after Nordau invented the concept of the muscle Jew, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* began carrying the subtitle “monthly for the corporeal improvement of the Jews.”<sup>347</sup>

Moreover, outdoor activities, and especially patriotic hiking trips where one is connecting with nature, breathing “fresh air”, were also articulated as a tool to rejuvenate the Jewish body. As Marcelo Svirsky explains, these hiking trips remain until today, in Israel, one of the main pedagogical tools of cultural governance. In *After Israel*, he illustrates how hiking, what seems to most of us as a benign apolitical activity, is in fact “shaped as a strategic political practice that converts every encounter with nature [and the land] into an occasion to immerse participants’ bodies in selective” Zionist biblical and nationalist myths and narratives that erase the recent and contemporary presence of “Arab” or Palestinian bodies and villages.<sup>348</sup> The action of hiking the Zionist way is akin to a military practice that serves to train bodies, survey and conquer the land, and create close-knit bounds within a unit or platoon. In a sense, just like the army experience for the Israeli-Jewish teenager entering boot camp or the *Gadna*, hiking is a central part of the nation-building process, bonding Jewish immigrants and communities from different backgrounds together.

As Svirsky explains, hiking holds a quasi-mythological status in Israel. Hence, it has been part of the mandatory school program since early in the twentieth century—before the creation of the State of Israel—through the discipline of *Yediat ha-Aretz* (knowledge of the land).<sup>349</sup> It is thus striking how the practice of hiking has remained through the years an important part of the state’s pedagogy with the intention of shaping Zionist bodies and minds. Indeed, still today, hiking the trails, as part of the school curriculum, serves to train the teenagers’ bodies and prepare them for their military training to come (mandatory in Israel for both men and women). It establishes a direct link with their presence on the land and the presence of their pioneering ancestors who conquered the land and fought the “Arabs.” In that sense, the experience works

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<sup>347</sup> Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 283.

<sup>348</sup> Svirsky, *After Israel*, 17.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

not only on the corporeal level but also on the mind of the pupils at the emotional and affective levels. In any case, here Zionism and contemporary Israel shares considerable baggage with Germany's early 20<sup>th</sup> century *freikörperkultur*. It ultimately aims at producing the warrior body early Zionists associated with the new Hebrew state.<sup>350</sup> In sum, hiking became an institutionalized practice of reterritorialisation that constantly performs the intimate link between the settler and the land.

While European Modernity articulated various 'scientific' discourses that presented the Jewish body's sexuality as failed, flaccid, and deviant, Zionism integrated the stigmas and reflected the desire to move toward becoming a non-stranger within Europe by revealing and creating the Jewish 'Self' and body through modernity's ontological basis of the nation-state and thus achieving autonomy (sovereignty), freedom, and manhood. Body aesthetics were thus a primary tool of capture and (re)territorialization. What the Zionists were fleeing was not just violence in Europe, but mostly the idea of the European Jew, and his/her body. But by fleeing in such a way, they were being captured by the very state apparatus they were trying to escape. Only in a new founded settler colonial state in historical Palestine would the Zionist be able to realize his phantasm of the One. Eitan Bar-Yosef summarizes,

Narrated from Tel-Aviv [...], the story of the Jewish yearning for whiteness is not about assimilation and acculturation but rather about colonial desire. Having internalized the anti-Semitic image of the Jew as effeminate, physically inferior, or even black (as Sander Gilman as shown), Zionism aspired to transform the defective Jewish body of the diaspora and create the New Jew necessary for national rejuvenation. As Daniel Boyarin has argued, it was precisely by transforming the Jews into colonists, in Palestine or elsewhere, that Theodor Herzl hoped to transform the dark, puny, Eastern European Jews (whom he likened to savage Hottentots) into virile white men.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Compare with K. Theweleit who writes "What is 'forged' is both the people of Germany and the body of the man himself. If he is to assume the attitude that is 'nation,' he must repeatedly forge himself anew as the product of strenuous labor. What is important is the activity of forging itself, and the material on the anvil is among other things 'the people' (das Volk) — not to be confused with 'the mass,' of which more in a moment. 'Volk' is a raw material which is to be shaped into proper form by the 'nation.' 'We do not do battle in order that the people may be happy. We do battle to force them into the shape for which they are destined' (Salomon). The people conforms to its destined shape only if it is dominated by the men of 'the nation.'" Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 84.

<sup>351</sup> Bar-Yosef, "Zionism, Apartheid, Blackface," 120.

It is in this sense that European colonialism (in all its forms) was definitely phallic. The phallic character translated into particular modalities of biopower that assigned to gendered and racialized bodies certain demands or imperatives in order to be valued (or discarded). The impact or effect on the identitarian and corporeal dynamics of pre-Statehood Israel, or *Yishuv*, and institutions was overarching. The impact was noticeable, for instance, in Hebrew literature, in which, according to Gluzman, “the construction of Zionist masculinity is such a prominent topic [...] that one could actually read the whole history of Hebrew literature in this century [...] as a consistent and almost obsessive concern with what is proper masculinity as well as a testimony to the Israeli culture’s attempt to repress the feminine...”<sup>352</sup> The movement of capture of Jewish bodies by European state phallocentrism and capitalist/colonial apparatus was thus achieved.<sup>353</sup>

### Rejuvenating the Jews’ “Shmok” to its Phallic Status

*But it is in his corporeality that the Negro is attacked. [...]one is no longer aware of the Negro but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is turned into a penis. He is a penis.*<sup>354</sup>

*So, diaper your son with uniforms, give him an anti-pyretic, anti-innocence military suppository, so that he falls in love with his penis, with the nation’s penis, with the army’s, so that he’ll be aroused by the smell of gun powder.... Hey, cute victim, what will you be, if you get to be, when you’re older? A man and a parachuter [sic]? And later? A grave.*<sup>355</sup>

In a sense, the process of Orientalization of European Jewish populations implied a form of castration. Or to put it differently, Euro-Christians reaffirmed their ‘superior’ masculine position by castrating and emasculating the European Jews. The Jew’s circumcised penis was often literally mistaken for castration, if not purposefully constructed and represented as such.<sup>356</sup> Hence, just like its domination of Africa, the European domination of the European Jews was

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<sup>352</sup> Michael Gluzman as quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 95.

<sup>353</sup> On the advent of colonialism as a new age of european masculine virility, see Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*; Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 97–98.

<sup>354</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks - New Edition*, 126, 130.

<sup>355</sup> From the poem “Yeru, Yeru, Yerushalayim” by Yitzhak La’or as quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, xi.

<sup>356</sup> Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 119.

characteristically *phallic*.<sup>357</sup> One only need to recall the famous cashiering scene during the Dreyfus affaire, whereby the colonel's sword – like his masculinity, honor, and ultimately, humanity – is broken in two. Indeed, much has been written about the weapon as an extension or a metaphor of the phallus, a prosthetic phallus.<sup>358</sup> The drawing (Fig. 2 below) that was published in *Le Petit Journal* showed to the whole France, and arguably Europe, how Jews had no place along non-Jewish virile men; amongst European warriors.



**Figure 4: Cashiering of Dreyfus as represented by Le Petit Journal**

At a minimum, what is of interest here is the Zionists' and Reformists' answer to this form of symbolic colonialism. As we have already seen above through Herzl's and Nordau's texts, this answer was also *phallic*. The phallic character of the Zionists' answer to the Jewish domination in Europe is best grasp when one turns to texts of first leading Zionist figures. The 'Muscle Jew' was the phallic figure par excellence, the symbol of a rising Jewish *Körperkultur*. The Jewish gymnanistics journal *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* made the whole enterprise even more explicit

<sup>357</sup> Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 134.

<sup>358</sup> Tellingly, in Hebrew, the same word ("zayin") means "weapon" and "penis". Handelzalts, "How One Hebrew Letter Came to Mean Both 'Penis' and 'Weapon.'"

when, in 1900, it explained that “the male members of the Bar Kochba gymnastics association are no longer ashamed of their circumcised penis; instead they show off their ‘surgical pinch’ with pride.”<sup>359</sup> Reforming one’s body was actually reforming one’s own center of masculinity, one’s own penis. But it also was, by extension, becoming part of a phallic entity that is a warrior (“Spartan”) nation. In other words, gymnastics became, to use Michel Foucault’s phrase, a “technique of the self” akin to military drill and training of Greek Spartan warriors producing the new Hebrew Zionist warrior body and thus turning nation and race into instruments of militarization of the self.<sup>360</sup> The “clear headed” and “muscle Jew” this stylization of the self would create a hard, phallic, and “mechanized” Jewish male body devoid of any effeminate attributes, a preliminary to the creation of the new Hebrew state in the Levant and the “the dreamt-of metallization of the human body.” The Israeli poet Ayin Hilel, in one of the most famous songs written during the war of independence, gave the Israeli-Sabra soldiers the surname “gray soldiers”. This last expression referred to Josef Trumpeldor’s assertion that a good sabra should constitute “a bar of metal, flexible – but metal. A metal that can be forged into whatever the national machinery needs.”<sup>361</sup> After all, *The Iron Wall* was Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinski’s manifesto’s title.

One can extend the analysis of the phallic character of this enterprise when one reads the journal *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*’s advocacy of the importance of gymnastics for Jewish women. Around the same time the Jewish penis was said to be fully rejuvenated and thus showable, the journal also argued that gymnastics was of central importance for Jewish women’s fertility, sexual reproduction, and the conception of a healthy family. It is however only 11 years after its foundation that the journal gave women a voice for the first time. In 1911

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<sup>359</sup> The shame came in part from the ancient Greece, when Greeks considered circumcision a form of mutilation, and the Greek athletes took precautions – such as tying and claspings the prepuce – during athletic competitions. During these ancient competitions, Jews of the time were subject to ridicule and often had recourse to epispasmós (a form of operation consisting in stretching what’s left of the prepuce) in order to conform. Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 295–296, endnote #37.

<sup>360</sup> Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinbach in Foreword to Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, xvii–xviii.

<sup>361</sup> As quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 22–23.

Betti Eger of the woman's division of the Jewish gymnastics association in which she argues, on behalf of the female members, "We want to contribute to the health of our people's body [*Volkskörper*]. We want to become strong muscle Jews [*kräftige Muskeljuden*]." Confirming the significant health benefits of gymnastics that her male colleagues consistently emphasized, Eger argues that gymnastics would not only produce healthier mothers but also beget stronger children. For this reason, she maintains, female muscle Jews are just as important as male muscle Jews for the creation of the new state.<sup>362</sup>

In other words, gymnastics was the nation building activity *par excellence* for it rejuvenated Jewish men's bodies and pricks and Jewish women's wombs, which are the receptacle for the former. Jewish women were ultimately reduced to an healthy and productive womb, an ambulant uterus ready to receive the semen of the phallus, in order to reproduce more healthy muscle phallic European Jews.

Ze'ev Jabotinski concurred in 1924 when he wrote that "the Hebraic man, who has not been taken care of throughout the generations, has been spoiled and become a caricature. Bent backbone, pointed chin, low lip – these are the characteristics. You [Zionist mothers of Israel] will rebuild the generation."<sup>363</sup> In other words, in the Zionist discourse, even women's bodies were apprehended from a phallic logic. It is worth quoting Daniel Boyarin at length here:

The civilizing mission, and its Jewish agents among 'the Enlightener', considered the fact that Jewish women behaved in ways interpreted as masculine by European bourgeois society to be simply monstrous. Modern Jewish culture, liberal and bourgeois in its aspirations and its preferred patterns of gendered life, has been the result of this civilizing mission. As Paula Hyman has recently demonstrated, the very Jewish religiosity of the modern bourgeois Jewish family is an assimilating mimicry of Protestant middle-class piety, not lest in its portrayal of proper womanhood. The richness of Jewish life and difference has been largely lost, and the gains for Jewish women were largely illusory.

Or, to put it another way, Jewish women and their bodies were just as much conscripted and *converted* by the Zionist project as were Jewish male bodies. They were presented as a necessary cog in the nationalist phallic assemblage. This gendered discourse continued after statehood and was widely institutionalized as well. As Meira Weiss notes, "[w]omen were defined, following 1948, as responsible for bearing as many children as possible 'for the glory of the State of Israel.' For many women, the revolutionary turn of Zionism therefore culminated in a return to a traditional gender role, namely, mothering."<sup>364</sup> This assignment of Jewish male and female

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<sup>362</sup> Presner, "Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles," 287.

<sup>363</sup> As quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 2.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

bodies to their gendered (fighting for one, reproducing for the second) was also an answer to the anti-semitic trope of the manlike-Jewish-castrating-women/mother who performs men's tasks and effeminate Jewish men ("sissy") said to be avoiding military service and other men-associated tasks.

However, if one turns to the various aesthetics productions of the time, which represent the rejuvenated Jewish body (such as E. M. Lilien drawing above, Fig. 1) one realizes that the penis is always hidden. Indeed, as Daniel Boyarin writes, "Insofar as the penis of flesh – as opposed to the phallus, which is a platonic idea of the penis – is paradoxically feminine in the European imaginary because it is body, it is this insistence precisely on the penis that inscribes the Jewish male as forever carnal and thus female."<sup>365</sup> The Jewish penis' is thus absent on masculinist and phallic aesthetic productions. Since the circumcised penis must be hidden, something else must replace it: it is the gun, the sword, the weapon. The gun becomes modernity's prosthetic phallus, the barracked body's penis



**Figure 5 and 6: Two pictures taken from an IDF soldier Instagram account. The penis is always hidden, replaced by a prosthetic phallus.<sup>366</sup>**

<sup>365</sup> Boyarin, "Unheroic Conduct," 2009, 88.

<sup>366</sup> Pictures taken from Doherty, "War sporno."



In Nordau's framing of the Zionist "muscle Jew", the heroic warrior character of the latter was central. That was in part a response to the anti-semitic policy that excluded Jew from the military service on the basis that their bodies – especially their (invented) tendency to flatfootness – were unfit for such task, and thus, more generally unfit to participate within other social institutions and society at large.<sup>367</sup> Indeed, by the end of the First World War, Jews' (imagined) non-participation in the military was at the center of the anti-Semitic discourse. Like Max Nordau, the German-Jewish physicist Dr. Elias Auerbach resolved to change the situation, and accepting/reproducing the anti-Semitic representation of the Jews' physical differences, he advocated the for introduction of "sport" in European Jews' lives. Its resultant, the (re)shaping of the Jewish body into a fit "warrior", and Jew's circumcised – and not castrated – proud warrior's phallus marked the intimacy between violence, colonialism, and modernity.<sup>368</sup> Nordau headed the same direction when he wrote

Our new muscles Jews have not yet regained the heroism of their forefathers . . . to take part in battles and compete with the trained Hellenic athletes and strong northern barbarians. But morally speaking, we are better off today than yesterday, for the old Jewish circus performers of yore were ashamed of their Judaism and sought, by way of a surgical pinch, to hide the sign of their religious affiliation . . . while today, the members of Bar Kochba [gymnastics association] proudly and freely proclaim their Jewishness.<sup>369</sup>

What these men did not have – an erect phallus – personally (for their circumcised penises, as 20<sup>th</sup> Century European history would tell us, would never gain the phallic character to the eyes of the 'Enlightened' Gentiles) at least collectively, like the *Freikorpsmen*, with the "elevated phallus" of the warrior nation, they could achieve it: he, "for once, was no longer castrated; he became part of the transcendental phallus that gave meaning to everything [...]."<sup>370</sup> And by the force of the European tribal nationalist phallic phantasm, a European Jewish elite came to think of itself, or, at least, came to fantasize and dream of itself as a warrior nation; a settler colonial

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<sup>367</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*; Michael J. Shapiro points out that the same kind of discourse was articulated in modern American Sociology - by sociologists such as T. Stoddard - who argued that the Jews' body prevented them to practice outdoor activities such as camping or canoeing. Shapiro, *Narrating the Nation Unwelcoming the Stranger*. I want to point to the irony of Israel's policy to exclude Israel-Palestinians from the military mandatory service from the outset, especially when one consider the role of the army in the socialization of teenagers and young adults.

<sup>368</sup> Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 44–49.

<sup>369</sup> Presner, "Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles," 283.

<sup>370</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 430.

nation, that, like all other manlike European fellows, needed its colonial-redemptive enterprise: reactive re-territorialization.

I wish to cut short the genealogical reading of the (re)production of particular modern European Jewish – and ultimately – Israeli Zionist body. The sections that follow dwell on this genealogy to problematize the Israeli Zionist life-management dispositif in contemporary Israeli, and especially, how it relates to its violent management of Arab/Palestinian/Bedouin/Migrant lives that do not fit the Jewish Zionist body politic.

### **The “Chosen Body”: The Sabra and the Policing of the Bio/Necro-political Boundaries in Contemporary Israel**

*Muslims that arrive here do not even believe that this country belongs to us, to the white man.*<sup>371</sup>

During the *Yishuv* the discourse of immunization against degeneracy was linked to the realization of statehood via the disciplining of the pioneer’s and sabra’s body. For instance, the early Zionist thinker Yitzhak Tabenkin requested that teachers, educators, and nurses begin their military formation of the new generations as early as kindergarten, “immunizing the child by sending him to spend his nights in the open, teach him how to use a stick and throw a stone, and make his body stronger.”<sup>372</sup> It is thus apposite to ask how does the Israeli life-management *dispositif* (re)produce this Sabra-making model and conversely, how is this production taking the form of a continuation of the ‘War on Terror’ and the ‘Conflict’ by other means? It is not simply a matter of asking *what* form does a proper life take; but *how* it is constituted in contemporary Israel by various agencies, institutions and practices involved in (re)producing a specific type of Israel body that are not necessarily recognized as being related to the army *per se*.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Interior Minister Eli Yishai, as quoted in “Israel Enacts Law Allowing Authorities to Detain Illegal Migrants for up to 3 Years - National.”

<sup>372</sup> As quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 24.

<sup>373</sup> I take my inspiration for this form of problematization from Michael J. Shapiro’s Michel Foucault inspired reading in Shapiro, “Life’s Contested Dispositifs: Apparatuses of Capture/Exuberant Lines of Flight.”

It is also a matter of questioning how Israel's colonial "phallic domination" is, as Mbembe writes, "based on a mobilization of the subjective foundations of masculinity and femininity [and how it] has direct, close connections with the general economy of sexuality."<sup>374</sup> To do so, in this section, I turn to various sites of incitement and policing within the Israel "proper". The reflection on sexuality and colonial violence is also pursued in the next Chapter 3 of this thesis. Part of the argument is that, even though these are often framed specifically as Israeli problems – that is, not related to the Israel-Palestine conflict – they are in fact closely related to Israel's warring and settler colonial relationship with Palestine and Europe's colonial legacy. In other words, the problem of degeneracy and the question of purity that widely alimented and motivated the Zionist biopolitical project to rejuvenated the European Jewish body and shape it into a warrior or warring body today takes a different, although similar, form whereby Israel's "demographic balance" is always posited as being threatened by internal and external bodies constituted in a "demographic threat".<sup>375</sup>

### *Eugenic Anxieties*

In the past two decades or so, 'revisionist' and 'post Zionist' scholars have challenge the foundational narratives shaping Israel's Western palimpsest. Yet, as their works becomes increasingly popular, other scholars in the departments of biology, genomics and medicine are doubling efforts in attempts to identify a "Jewish Gene".<sup>376</sup> The staggering amount of resources invested in this endeavor reflects the anxiety around the manliness, purity, and rejuvenation of the "Jewish body" as well as the legitimacy of the correlative Zionist violent and moral cartography.

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<sup>374</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 13.

<sup>375</sup> Such is the term used by Knesset's Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs to euphemize racist biopolitical concerns for the Hebrew Nation-State. See Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, 1.; Or take the declaration of Avigdor Lieberman, then Israeli Foreign Minister, who declared that "The real intention of the Palestinians is not to establish a state that will live in peace alongside Israel but rather the establishment of a state free of Jews in [the West Bank] and the hostile takeover of Israel from within" as quoted in Ravid, DPA, and Press, "Lieberman."

<sup>376</sup> Entine, Jon., "DNA Links Prove Jews Are a 'Race,' Says Genetics Expert - Jewish World News"; See also the controversy about the removal of an online version of the *Human Immunology* journal article in 2001 as discussed in Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 239.

As we have seen in the previous chapter the large influx of Middle Eastern Jews shortly after Israel's independence triggered identitarian responses. They were in large part also informed by eugenic and racial thought. The bodies of the Mizrahim, like the ones of Subsaharan Africans' slaves brought to the Americas centuries before, were considered to be fit to implement the hard manual work and sustain the physical hardships that the enterprise of colonialism demanded. Hence, as mentioned previously, *Mizrahim* were sent to "development towns," where basic sanitary infrastructures were lacking and physical labour a daily routine. By sending these newly arriving migrants to underdeveloped spaces, Israel's administrators actively constituted these "Oriental" Jewish bodies as "black" bodies. In fact, what the Ashkenazi elite and administration was doing is that it was producing the Mizrahi bodies as such, "blackening" the body by submitting it to harsh almost slave-like hardships and work while whitening the Ashkenazi population of the coastal urban areas. In other words, development town were not so much the produce of Mizrahi population as the Mizrahi body was the produce of these towns (and their creators, the Ashkenazi elite).<sup>377</sup> In turn, the process of creating developmental towns for Mizrahi that contributed to Judaize "empty" Palestinian land also produced Tel Aviv as a white, Western liberal Zionist space and created a "buffer" zone between the Ashkenaz elite and the Palestinian enemy.<sup>378</sup>

The "Arab-Jew", with its Middle Eastern cultural and bodily traits associated with Eastern effeminate, childish, irrational, weak, colonial tropes posed the threat of queering the Ashkenazim Zionist narration of the nation and the new Jewish body.<sup>379</sup> As such, the westernization project of the state to be created was embedded in an impetus to remasculinize

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<sup>377</sup> See Elizabeth Grosz "Bodies-Cities" in Colomina and Bloomer, *Sexuality & Space*, 245, 250–51.

<sup>378</sup> Although the dynamic changed following Likud's election in 1977 with the "Build Your Own House Program," opening the ground to the "Oriental Mob" - the Mizrahim and their "architectural cacophony, a mishmash of styles". See Rotbard, *White City, Black City*.

<sup>379</sup> As Ella Shohat notes, "The Ostjuden, perennially marginalized by Europe, realized their desire of becoming Europe, ironically, in the Middle East, this time on the back of their own 'Ostjuden,' the Eastern Jews". Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 188; In fact, "The Zionist discourse also held wide currency, and Zionist condescension, even disgust, toward 'weak' Holocaust survivors, 'backward' Yiddish-speakers from the East European ghettos, 'non-ideological' refugees, and Diaspora Jews generally". Khazzoom, "The Great Chain of Orientalism," 188; See also Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*.

(and whiten) the oriental Jewish body. We thus arrive at this ambivalence and inherent tension constitutive of the sabra, where the European Jew *and* the Middle Eastern Arab share the same effeminate, hysterical, childish, irrational, weak character but where the former is considered redeemable, the latter is beyond redemption. The redemption of the former is performatively related with the latter in that to be redeemed, he must perform *advitam eternam* his difference from the latter. War here becomes the ultimate proof and performance. Hence, for the Mizrahi, producing his body as a sabra body is something that must be performed again and again.

If we turn to Meira Weiss' inquiries on the trope of the "chosen body", we note that the Sabra body is ever present, from the fetus *in utero* to the dead buried body in the cemetery. The biopolitical practices and governmentality reflect the desire to construct a particular Israeli-Jewish subject and body.<sup>380</sup> That is, as we have seen above, the colonial eugenic discourse which is integral to Zionism, demands that Nordau's "Judaism with muscle" must be reproduced and defended against the "unathletic build", "narrow shoulders", "clumsy feet" and "sloppy roundish shape", while being kept pure from the emasculated and deviant Arab/Palestinian/Migrants traits.

In contemporary Israel, the effect of this gendered eugenic discourse is that, for instance, "Israeli women hold the [OECD] record for fetal diagnostics"<sup>381</sup>, where "the Zionists' eugenics turned into a selective prenatal policy backed by state-of-the-art genetic technology"<sup>382</sup>. The resulting effect is a form of biopolitical exclusion, whereby "[a]bout 50% of the impaired children [are] rejected altogether", and among the 50% of impaired children taken home by their parents, 80% are kept secluded.<sup>383</sup> While abortions in cases of fetal defects are welcomed, if not encouraged, abortions for women with no fetal diagnostic are highly discouraged if not rejected

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<sup>380</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 32.

<sup>381</sup> Weiss also notes that "Israel has the world's largest number, on average, of tests per pregnancy. It is the first in the world in the rate of amniocentesis (undertaken by about 20 percent of pregnant women). In addition, Israel has more fertility clinics per capita than any other country in the world, not because of high rates of infertility but because of the centrality of reproduction." *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>383</sup> As such, Israel is country with the highest rate of child rejection in the world. Moreover, Israel is also number one when it comes to the proportion of children rejected for physical flaws (external defects as opposed to internal defects) *ibid.*, 32–33.

by a committee of experts and are labeled as “reproductive deviants”<sup>384</sup>. Far from being apolitical, the project of the perfect body is backed by scientists and “Physicians, who regard themselves as ‘commando fighters’” who “will justify abortions by the military thinking that sees killing as a necessary means for attaining its goals”.<sup>385</sup> At the dawn of the new millennium, 68 percent of Israeli geneticists agreed that “giving birth to a child with a serious impairment is *socially* wrong” and that 14 percent of them agree that their role is to “purify the human genetic pool”.<sup>386</sup> Bodies are thus chosen before birth; here the biopolitics literally represents the continuation of war by other means.

Similarly, the pathologizing of the sexuality of young children – especially Jewish-Israeli girls – and the inflation of the sexual perversion of “Arab men” and more recently Eritrean migrants is accomplished in the form of a crusade for the health of the nation and the race.<sup>387</sup> Whereas in Jerusalem patrols work to stop these “Arab men” from mixing with local Jewish women, the city of Petah Tikva went further and created a hotline where Israeli citizens can call to in order to denounce Jewish women who mingle with “Arab men”. Once the women are identified, they are “treated as pathological cases and sent to a psychologist”.<sup>388</sup> The *Yad L’Achim* organisation says it “rescues” Jewish women from “hostile Arab villages, in co-ordination with the police and army.”<sup>389</sup> The most recent of such event takes the logic even further. Indeed, by the end of December 2015, the Israeli Ministry of Education banned from the country’s highschool curriculum Dorit Rabinyan’s “Gader Haya”, “a novel that describes a love story between an Israeli woman and a Palestinian man”. The Ministry did so despite the fact “officials responsible for teaching of literature in secular state schools recommended the book for use in advanced literature classes, as did a professional committee of academics and educators.”<sup>390</sup> The reason advanced to justify the ban is that the simple fact of narrating, even in

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 3. My emphasis.

<sup>387</sup> See especially Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, chap. 5.

<sup>388</sup> Zizek, “Israel’s Best Hope Lies in a Single State.”

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Kashti, “Israel Bans Novel on Arab-Jewish Romance From Schools for ‘Threatening Jewish Identity.’”

fiction, the romance between an Israeli woman and a Palestinian man represents a grave danger and menace to the Israeli identity and “demographic balance”.

If we dig a little deeper, it is possible to locate the pathologization of “Arab-ness” in a larger arena of racial and eugenic anxiety that is in no way restricted to Palestinian or Arabs, even extending to “black” Jews (*falasha* or Ethiopian Jews). While most of the some 119,300 Ethiopian Jews’ immigration to Israel was initiated by the Israeli State, their presence has and still disturbs Israel’s moral geography of a white, Western, European, and “civilized” state and the correlate anxieties of safeguarding the purity of Jewish bodies from racial degeneracy. Indeed, already in January 1995, the Israeli daily *Ma’ariv* reported that Israeli blood banks had been secretly destroying the blood donations made by Israeli Ethiopians Jews.<sup>391</sup> Concerns over “blood purity, hygiene and degree of Jewishness were, and still are, points of contention concerning their simultaneous exclusion from and inclusion in the Israeli ethno-national project.”<sup>392</sup> *The Guardian* was reporting that in 2003, Chinese migrant workers in Israel had “been forced to agree not to have sex with or marry Israelis as a condition of getting a job.”<sup>393</sup> In 2009, a government backed television campaign urging Israeli Jews to report relatives outside the country who were in the process of marrying a non-Jew was withdrawn after being nonetheless on air for a while.<sup>394</sup> In another instance of eugenic anxiety, Israeli social workers discovered, after looking at the birthrate of Ethiopians refugees and Ethiopian Jews (*Falasha*) halving over a decade, that these women were injected Depo Provera every three months – often without their knowledge nor consent, and often being told they were given flu vaccination.<sup>395</sup>

More recently, following those government anxiety-driven “hygienic” policies, and in the context of lynch-style attacks on Palestinian youths in Jerusalem, racist (and literally fascist), Jewish extremists from the *Lehava* organisation have started a campaign calling on Arab men to keep out of popular Jerusalem hangouts and avoid dating Jewish girls – “for their own good” –

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<sup>391</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 62.

<sup>392</sup> Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, 11.

<sup>393</sup> Urquhart, “Chinese Workers in Israel Sign No-Sex Contract.”

<sup>394</sup> Zizek, “Israel’s Best Hope Lies in a Single State.”

<sup>395</sup> Greenwood, “Ethiopian Women in Israel ‘given Contraceptive without Consent.’”

through the multiplication of racist and menacing posters on the city's walls.<sup>396</sup> In another instance, the city of Kiryat Gat launched in 2008 a program in its schools to teach Jewish girls about the dangers of dating local Arabs using a short film called *Sleeping With the Enemy*, which presents mixed couples as an “unnatural phenomenon”. One of the Rabbis of the city – Shmuel Eliyahu – informed the local newspaper that the act of “seducing” a Jewish girl by an Arab should be considered as “another form of war”. The “mingling of human bodies” literally becomes “an unresolvable dilemma”<sup>397</sup> for this form of biopower.

Certainly, we should consider this didactic recourse to “war” seriously, and not, simply as a metaphor, for in fact, the silent war that this chapter (and this thesis) is theorizing is the dispersion of the policing of Jewish-ness and Israeli-ness in civil society. For in this case, the (re)production and policing of the Israeli Jewish body takes the form of continuation of war by other means. Or, to put it differently, in Klaus Theweleit's words, “War is a process that regenerates both the nation and the soldier male himself.”<sup>398</sup> That is, the incitement and encouragement of certain libidinal economies as well as the policing, maiming and killing of others literally is the continuation of Israel's biopolitical warring policy.

Beyond this pre-natal and post birth criteria selection policy, one of the most important selection Israeli bodies have to go through is at 18 years old, when they face military conscription and training. In Israel, military screening's legitimacy is largely due to the military's perceived role not only for survival but also as educator of national values.<sup>399</sup> Thanks to the military service, “imperfections”<sup>400</sup> are weeded out, and “[p]eople unfit for such national service are bound to be deemed marginal”.<sup>401</sup> Here again, Israeli physicians – as the prime holders of body knowledge – play an important role as “guardians of Israeli health and selectors of the chosen body.” Just like the obstetrician, gynecologist and geneticists before them, they are the “gatekeepers for elite military units”. As such, they are also the “gatekeepers of masculinity

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<sup>396</sup> Matar, Haggai., “Poster Calls on Arab Men to Keep out of Jerusalem, Away from Jewish Girls.”

<sup>397</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 362.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, 88.

<sup>399</sup> Weiss, “The Body of the Nation,” 2002, 42.

<sup>400</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 46.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 88; See also Svirsky, *After Israel*.



by selecting and grading prospective recruits and further selecting those who volunteer for the elite combat units.”<sup>402</sup> Shortly after the 1967 war, proud of its total success, the Israeli Army produced a physical fitness book directed to external (especially U.S.) audiences that explained that “[t]he Israeli Army is producing a new type of man in this young energetic Middle Eastern country.”<sup>403</sup> War and preparation to combat were literally presented as a laboratory for a new modern man, an example that was worth emulating. Here the Jewish Israeli body literally was one of the first technologies the country’s war-filled experience would produce and export – long before the Uzi and the drone.

This step in the life of Israeli men (for elite combat units are almost exclusively made up of men) has become the most important step in the definition of who one is in the Israeli society (social status and possibility of rapidly climbing the social ladder). Indeed, as Meira Weiss notes, “[c]onscription and military service are the ultimate social goals of the chosen body.”<sup>404</sup> So much so that there is now an economy of preparatory “advanced” training for highschoolers who wish to qualify for the elite IDF units (such as pilots, naval commandos, and etc.). *Ha’aretz* reported in 2013 that

The cost to participate in a training group runs between NIS 250 and NIS 350 a month. The program at Eilam’s center, for example, includes three sessions a week and a lecture for NIS 290 to NIS 360 a month. Activities are done in groups of 25 led by three instructors. Another program, Xpert Combat Fitness, offers three weekly sessions and a special monthly half-day workout for NIS 280 a month.<sup>405</sup>

Hence, while the IDF test only comes at the age of 18, the entirety of most Israeli teenage men highschool years can be grasped from a military training perspective. The Zionist “warrior” body becomes a marketable entity in the Israeli neoliberal economy of violence.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 59.

<sup>403</sup> Lurie, *The Israel Army Physical Fitness Book*, 14.

<sup>404</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 42.

<sup>405</sup> Harel, “High School Boot Camp.”

<sup>406</sup> That point seems to highlight the remarkable continuity between 19th century ethos of colonialisation and contemporary Israel’s. As Achille Mbembe writes about late 19th century France, “The students [écoliers] are educated to become citizen-soldiers. Citizen pedagogy and colonial pedagogy unfold on a background of masculinity crisis and apparent moral disarmament.” Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 100. My translation.

Moreover, this imperative of shaping one's own body for the purpose of war making is, in Israel, a veritable form of *dressage*, a policing of the Jewish body. As Michael J. Shapiro notes, "Lefebvre saw [dressage] as a pervasive aspect of modernity, a system through which humans 'break themselves in like animals [through repetition]...one breaks-in another living human by making them repeat a certain act.' Like Foucault, [Lefebvre] saw it as a legacy of 'the military model,' which got extended as a 'rhythm through all phases of our temporality'"<sup>407</sup> and one could add, of our society. Heeding Deleuze, John Protevi writes that this form of bodily dressage<sup>408</sup> has a major impact on the affective economy of a society in-as-much as the body should be understood by how it can be affected (what can affect it and to what degree?).<sup>409</sup> As such, the production of military soldiery Israeli-Jewish bodies constitutes a set of "geo-bio-affective group subjectification practices". "Practices, Protevi argues, producing specialized affective structures relative to position in society, that is, relative to their contribution to the effectiveness of wars fought by that society."<sup>410</sup> Hence, there is an important point to be made here which is that, yes Israel in the last 10 or 15 years been exporting a lot of its weapons and technologies. But the most ignored of all these "technologies" is its embodied geo-bio-affective assemblage now implemented across the planet in the form of security policies, migrant containment designs, and military doctrines.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, every "Israeli-Arab" citizen (Israeli-Palestinians), with the exception of those coming from the Druze community, physically fit or not, receives, prior to any military screening exams, where screening here is an euphemism for selection, an exemption

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<sup>407</sup> Inside quotes are from Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis. Shapiro, *Politics and Time: Documenting the Event*.

<sup>408</sup> Achille Mbembe identifies three "vectors" of dressage: conversion to christianism, the introduction of market economy, and the adoption of rational and enlightened forms of government. Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 132. I am paraphrasing.

<sup>409</sup> He writes, "the body politic as neither a simple blank slate nor a determined mechanism, but as biologically open to the subjectification practices it undergoes in its cultural embedding, practices that work with the broad contours provided by the genetic contribution to development to install culturally variant triggers and thresholds to the basic patterns that are our common heritage." Protevi, "Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March."

<sup>410</sup> Ibid. And, in the case of the sabra warrior, but also masculine modernity, as he points out, "war was a selection pressure on group subjectification practices for forming different bodies politic" "affective bodies are experientially constructed, and that experience is open to the social; it's a matter of variations on an inherited biological capacity for plasticity."

from the mandatory military service. This is thus a way of policing the body, since when one adds that for many Israelis, having served as a soldier forms part of one's self-definition as a citizen and that the consensus view is that failure to fulfill one's military duty is equivalent to "a kind of primordial taint".<sup>411</sup> Even more importantly, when one considers the importance that the mandatory national military service plays in the socialization of teenagers and young adults, it is also – if not mostly – about keeping Israeli-Jews and Israeli-Palestinian young adults separate and preventing them to mingle.<sup>412</sup> Moreover, veterans benefit from concrete advantages such as enhanced access to social services.<sup>413</sup> As a result, the military mandatory conscription in Israel is probably to most important tool for channeling young adults' desires and sexual ambitions for state purposes. The various social classes are reproduced, and so are the ethnic lines and the racial boundaries of the body politics. The military service, as a key symbol "denoting manhood and legitimizing male superiority" is here also linked to the process of racialization, and thus, also as another tactic of a war waged by other means.

This logic is pushed beyond the life of the Israeli soldier, and extended to his death. Indeed, the Forensic Institute of Medicine of Israel, where bodies of fallen soldiers and Israeli victims of terrorism end up, "'body identification' and 'bodyTalk' [are identifiable] as complementary aspects of the discourse of collective, national identity in contemporary Israel".<sup>414</sup> Practices of staff at the Forensic Institute, such as the handling of the body and collected tissues reflect the boundaries of collective identity in Israel. Dichotomies are marked – through the handling and exams – between Jewish bodies and non-Jewish ones, and between soldiers and non-soldiers. Soldiers get special treatment based on a rather simple verdict: "If Jewish bodies stand for 'us',

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<sup>411</sup> Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, 199; One also needs to point to the irony of this exclusion policy towards the Palestinians for the exclusion of Jews from military service in 18th and 19th century Europe was identified as one of the main factors contributing to the rise of political antisemitism. See Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, chap. 2: The Jewish Foot.

<sup>412</sup> Myron Aronoff noted in late 80s that the "primary site of passage that initiates one into full membership in the Zionist civil religion is service in the IDF. It is the single-most-important test, particularly for males, for individual and group acceptance in the mainstream of Israeli society." Aronoff, *Israeli Visions and Divisions*, 132.; See also Ferguson, Kathy., "From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel," 452.

<sup>413</sup> "IDF Veterans to Receive Extra Benefits."

<sup>414</sup> Weiss, "The Body of the Nation," 2002, 38–39.

soldiers are ‘the best of us’”.<sup>415</sup> In fact, deaths during battle or caused by terrorist acts are at the heart of the semiotic locus that serves to embody the nation.

On a side note, when one understands the centrality of the body in the Zionist ethno-nationalist assemblage and its project, the suicide bomber’s act of self-annihilation can be grasped beyond the mere tactical advantage afforded by a well-concealed human-guided bomb. As Puar notes, “The dispersion of the boundaries of bodies forces a completely chaotic challenge to normative conventions of gender, sexuality, and race, disobeying normative conventions of ‘appropriate’ bodily practices and the sanctity of the able body.” By making her/himself explode in the middle of a group of ethnonationally sanctified bodies, the suicide bomber forces the dispersion of his disqualified and superfluous body part and ultimately its blending with the surrounding bodies. As such, the death through explosion of the monstrous suicide bomber is a queering erotic ballistic act and event – for sexuality is ultimately about the “dissolution of bodily boundaries” – that ultimately queers the European inherited phallic and malestream ethnonational Zionist project.<sup>416</sup> This mixing of the two differently qualified bodies, “bit by bit, [...] part by part [...], alters both and produces a composite relation of parts that dominates the relations of both components.”<sup>417</sup> When a victim survives, her maimed and altered body falls back in the category of the monstrous that the Zionist dispositif sought to eliminate.<sup>418</sup>

I want to conclude this section with a quote from a military man taking himself for a doctor, for, if doctors also claim to be soldiers, it certainly the right of this man to claim a bit of their medical profession. For, where biopolitics and necropolitics meet, the delivering of death on disvalued, abandoned, and superfluous bodies literally means fighting for a biopolitically qualified life. In an interview with today’s Israel’s Minister of Defense (and then Israeli Chief of Staff) Moshe Ya’alon, the Israeli journalist Ari Shavit, working for the daily *Ha’aretz*, asked: “There is something surprising in the fact that you see the Palestinian threat as an existential threat.” The Israeli Chief of Staff’s answer came in a fascinating diatribe associating his own

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 47–48.

<sup>416</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 220.

<sup>417</sup> Bruce Baugh in Parr, Adrian., *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, 36.

<sup>418</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*.

task of defending the nation through warring policy with the task of a oncologist fighting cancer menacing the dissolution of the body into a bloody mass:

The characteristics of that threat are invisible, like cancer. When you are attacked externally, you see the attack, you are wounded. Cancer, on the other hand, is something internal. Therefore, I find it more disturbing, because here the diagnosis is critical. If the diagnosis is wrong and people say it's not cancer but a headache, then the response is irrelevant. But I maintain that it is cancer. My professional diagnosis is that there is a phenomenon here that constitutes an existential threat.<sup>419</sup>

Notice here how the Palestinian from within (Israeli-Palestinians) with Israeli citizenship is not even differentiated from the “outside” threat. In fact, the outside threat seem to be only a displacement, an externalized figure that threaten dissolution. That is, the racist dream of a biopolitically exclusive Jewish state is being threatened by a minority now composing one fifth of the Israeli population. In any case, Israeli doctors and Israeli military officers are in for the same combat. As Meira Weiss notes, “[e]ven in a period regarded as post-Zionist, the culture of the chosen body still influences public opinion; witness, the continuing exclusion of people with disabilities and homosexuals, the abortion and rejection of children with impairments, and so on.”<sup>420</sup> The military literally becomes an extension of the medical arm of the state, and the weapon an extension of the phallus. This phallus dreams of perfect bodies (insemination) but also of dead bodies (delivery of death, castration of degenerated and deviant bodies).

### ***Military Grade Incitement***

Apart from the defense of a body politic, other sites are intended to incite certain bodies to mingle with Israeli-Jewish bodies, to reproduce that particular body politic. That is the case for instance of the *Birthright* (*Taglit* in Hebrew) program which brings Jewish teens and young adults from the U.S., Canada, Russia and other (mostly) white European countries to Israel for 10 days, all expenses paid. The trip serves to enlist more Jewish bodies in the Israeli ethno-national project by bringing them to historical sites and the Zionist narratives that gives them meaning.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Ari Shavit. Shavit, Ari., “The Enemy Within.”

<sup>420</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, 138.

<sup>421</sup> For instance Fidan Mammadova, a 2012 Birthrighter, who is quoted on the Birthright website, states that she “was impressed by what Israelis have accomplished, particularly Kibbutzim

Furthermore, these visits “testifying” of the *exceptional* character of Israel and its unique subject are coupled with the *exceptional* bodies themselves. In fact, young Israeli soldiers dressed in uniform hop on the bus with the ‘Birthrighters’ for the sole purpose of mingling with the group. Encounters that often lead to sexual relations (some even talk of “forced sexuality”) are more than welcomed.<sup>422</sup> As one woman who took part in the Birthright trip writes:

Birthright Israel is no exception to the singles culture of American Judaism. Created both as a way to connect Diaspora Jews with Israel and to fight apathy and intermarriage in the Diaspora itself, the 10-day free trip to Israel is largely about coupling. While Birthright is not advertised as a dating and mating service, continuity through avoidance of intermarriage is undoubtedly one of its goals. [...] The tone was set upon arrival in Israel during our first of two sessions with Shlomo ‘Momo’ Lifshitz, [...] who] lectured on, among other things, the unquestionable importance of coupling off with another Jew, preferably on day one of your Birthright trip.<sup>423</sup>

Similarly, in an article published in 2012 entitled “I Gave a Handjob at Jew Camp,” Rose Surnow recounts her Birthright experience, calling it an “al-expense-paid orgy in the desert.”<sup>424</sup> In her article, she describes one of the activities organized for Birthright, where “45 of us were going to sleep in one massive tent in the desert, which in our sleazy minds meant HOOK-UP-CITY.” The experience is, as we have seen in the previous chapter, part of the nativizing function of settler-colonialism, establishing an intimate and erotic relationship with the land and reinforcing the link between the Zionist nationalist phantasm of a nation and land making one. The general sexualized experience of Birthright is now well known and websites do offer advice to future ‘Birthrighters’, such as the “‘The Unofficial Guide to Sex and Drugs on Birthright Trips,’ in which potential hookups are encouraged. This website gives advice on condom usage as well as rules for ‘hooking up’ with soldiers, counselors, and other participants.”<sup>425</sup>

Birthright here appears as a contemporary liberal and international version of the 1960s and 70s Zionist socialist summer camps based on the model of the *kibbutz* where higher middle-class

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transforming the desert landscape into fertile plantations” reifies the narrative of “making the desert bloom” seen in the previous chapter. Taglit-Birthright, “About Taglit-Birthright” accessed on July 5th 2014.

<sup>422</sup> Rose, “How Many More Orgasms Will Be Had for Zionism?”

<sup>423</sup> Maltz, “The Jewish Quarterly.”

<sup>424</sup> Surnow, “I Gave a Handjob at Jew Camp” The following quote is also from this text.

<sup>425</sup> Rose, “How Many More Orgasms Will Be Had for Zionism?”

Jewish American Ashkenazim would mingle – camps such as *Habonim* (it still exist today, although in an altered form). Both forms are part of cultural governance and ethnonationalist tactics that eroticizes the relationship to the land (including the West Bank and Gaza) and thus legitimates and moralizes Israel's occupation and warring policy. The question thus becomes what is the connection (if there is any) or the process by which the eroticization of the land is shifted toward the eroticization of specific bodies?

In the popular culture of the young Israeli soldiers, it is considered somewhat of an achievement to have sex with a 'Jewish American Princess' (often referred to as JAP) and other diasporic Jewish women who are constantly fantasized as being in danger of "inter-marriage".<sup>426</sup> Indeed, as one ex-IDF soldier who participated in the program told me during my stay in Israel, the Israeli military commandment choses soldiers with the proper language proficiency and enough (Zionist) "knowledge" of the country so the latter can act as "militarized" tour guides. The military command also presents the experience to these volunteering soldiers as a reward and a mission, where a certain military ethic is still required. Mingling and having sexual relations is not proscribed, if not encouraged by officers. What this person also told me was that one close family member worked in the Israeli headquarters of Birthright and that the top administrators of the program did see the whole affaire as a enterprise in making more "Jewish babies".<sup>427</sup> As one Birthright participant herself put it, "The goal of Birthright, which is partially sponsored by the Israeli government, is that young Semites will meet, marry and procreate, yielding little mini Jews. I am not religious but I do love hummus and making out, so obviously I had to go."<sup>428</sup> Indeed, it is now no secret that the "godfather of the Birthright" program ("Yossi

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<sup>426</sup> Heeding Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, we could say that Birthright is first and foremost about the fostering of a particular libidinal economy, about "compartmental sexualities that are tolerated or encouraged; proximities that serve as surveillance procedures, and function as mechanism of intensification; contacts that operate as inductors." Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 46.

<sup>427</sup> "The story of Birthright begins with the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey. The findings unleashed a panic within the halls of American Jewish institutions: 52 percent of Jews were marrying outside the faith." in Feldman, Kiera., "The Romance of Birthright Israel."

<sup>428</sup> Surnow, "I Gave a Handjob at Jew Camp."

Beilin, a Labor Party stalwart and an instrumental figure in the Oslo Accords”) wanted with this idea “to create a situation whereby spouses are available.”<sup>429</sup>

These encounters between Israeli soldiers and diaspora Jews are called *mifgash* (Hebrew for encounter) and were created so common affects were shared between two bodies: “These encounters between American youth and youthful Israeli soldiers ‘move very fast to what we call ‘hormonal *mifgashim*,’” revealed the educator at the root of the *mifgash* idea before adding: “Things happen.”<sup>430</sup> So much so that, for their part, many (mostly male) soldiers who participate in *Taglit* call it “*shaglit*”. Still according to this same ex-IDF soldier and *Birthright* participant, there is a particular term for Israeli soldiers with girlfriends (or boyfriends) who get to participate in the program; the Hebrew word they use refers to a something akin to a waste of opportunity, a “waste of assignment”. In other words, a soldier with sexual restraint obligations who participates in the *Birthright* program is “cockblocking” others.

## Conclusion

*The heroic male, no matter where he hails from, will always raise an anxious professorial finger to test the icy political winds he himself generates. He will anticipate a salvation that he invariably considers to have been already realized elsewhere—in the Soviet Union, in China, among the Spartans or the South Sea islanders. [...] This man sees himself instead from the fictive perspective of a disembodied being, as the cornerstone of a monument to eternity, or the linchpin on which the monster-machine hinges. His abandoned body becomes the burden he lays on the shoulders of his colonized victims. [...] His only solution is to abstract from his own body. For him, the body survives only in the form of occupied territory.*<sup>431</sup>

In sum, what this chapter gestures to is the modern tactics and strategies dedicated to the differential (re)production and (re)organisation of bodies so as to expunge what is deemed to be *monstrous* while, at the same time policing the possibilities for the “emergence of certain forms of life complicit in the martial logic of rule.”<sup>432</sup> It argues, while taking the case of Israel, that the process of capture of War Machines – communities or groups “heterogeneous to the state

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<sup>429</sup> Feldman, Kiera., “The Romance of Birthright Israel.”

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 418.

<sup>432</sup> Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War”; See also Evans and Hardt, “Barbarians to Savages.”



apparatuses, to their procedures of administration and of control over the social field” – is intimately linked to process of shaping and producing particular bodies.

Framed as such, the life-inimical body of the ‘Arab’ or ‘Palestinian’ *qua* terrorist shares the same space as ‘defective’ (teratological, monstrous) Jewish body (be it born or unborn) as opposed to the ‘chosen body’ of the Israeli male soldier. As it will become more obvious in Chapter 4 of this thesis, what this means is that war is no longer fought merely along the lines of friendship/enmity. Indeed, it is in fact “the production of these categories (and the multiple sub-categories that populate them) which itself is internal to ‘war.’”<sup>433</sup> What I have been thus trying to do in this chapter, from a Global Politics perspective concerned with war is effecting a change in the way we think about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and thus, war in general. That is, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been in large part about the immanent production of Jewish identities, bodies, and forms of life, “with, as Brad Evans and Laura Guillaume write, what we might call a political economy whereby the production of life is itself the production of war.”<sup>434</sup> Here the victims of this war, to various degrees, are not only Palestinians, ‘Arabs,’ Bedouins, Mizrahim, Ethiopian Jews, African asylum seekers, but also impaired Ashkenazi Jews amongst others.

In a sense, the evocation of figure of the *monster*, by linking the Palestinian body with the impaired Jewish body, interrupts and disrupts the eugenic logic. By taking the vantage point of the monster, we can place both these groups of bodies as that which opposes the state’s apparatus and dispositif, and show that the conflict’s line are more blurry than what is acknowledge by the macropolitical readings of this set of events. When war is understood as such, it allows to register the suffering of *both* Palestinians *and* impaired Israeli-Jewish bodies while also gesturing to the extension of war to the entirety of society (education, health, and other ‘civil’ dispositifs).<sup>435</sup> When paired with a genealogical reading of the contemporary Israeli-Jewish body, we are in better position to appreciate the intimacy between Europe’s Enlightenment and

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<sup>433</sup> Evans and Guillaume, “Deleuze and War.”

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> I take my inspiration for this reading and form of problematization from Opondo, “Philopoesis And/as Resistance.”

colonial legacy and contemporary ethnonational projects that draw on narrative of self-emancipation, reformation and self-aestheticization.

In sum, what I have tried to argue in this chapter is that the Zionist discourse on the body has inherent tensions that still produce the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. That is, by internalizing the anti-Semitic European tropes and adopting its own conceptualization of the Hebrew masculine warrior and by adopting the same discursive and institutional strategies Europeans used against Jews – discourses such as Social Darwinism, colonialism, nationalism, eugenics, and race – Zionists replicated the violent model of identity/difference that was wielded against them by Euro-Christians and deflected toward other East-European Jews (at first), Middle Eastern Jews, and against Arabs/Palestinians. In short, Zionism’s discourse of self (psychological and embodied) and national (Jewish people) emancipation was built by the tools that had and still serve to oppress and dominate colonized people across the globe, including European Jews themselves.<sup>436</sup>

That being said, Zionist thinkers also added their own contribution to the well-oiled European assemblage. Indeed, the trope of the muscle Jew couple these European tropes with a significant investment in masculine and military ideals, to the point where war, as in the case of the *Freikorpsmen*, literally became a way of life for settlers and later, Israelis. To go back to my concluding remarks from the last chapter, it is here again a matter of recognizing how Zionists also participated in bio-political enterprise that, although it can in no way be associated with the Nazi regime, shares the same cultural, intellectual, social, and political impetus that led to what Theweleit’s fascists called the “men-of-steel”, or, in Hilel words, “gray soldiers”.<sup>437</sup> Maybe it is

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<sup>436</sup> As Todd E. Presner writes “‘Jewish settlers who screamed into this country brought with them the experiences of the whole cultured world [i.e. Europe]’ Herzl writes in his novel. In other word [...] the European idea of civilization, somehow able to be differentiated and divorced from anti-Semitism, was still worthy of emulation when it was imported into the service of corporeal and national regeneration.” in Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 10.

<sup>437</sup> It is apposite, I believe, to recall one of Klaus Theweleit passage here: What is “forged” is both the people of Germany and the body of the man himself. If he is to assume the attitude that is “nation,” he must repeatedly forge himself anew as the product of strenuous labor. What is important is the activity of forging itself, and the material on the anvil is among other things “the people” (das Volk) — not to be confused with “the mass,” of which more in a moment. “Volk” is a raw material which is to be shaped into proper form by the “nation.” “We do not do battle in

apposite to ask once more what kind of reading of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may emerge if we acknowledge that “Jewish militarism and its body ideals (aggressive, steeled, warrior-like)” share common grounds with “other, more dangerous regenerative movements that also posited the birth of a ‘new man’”?<sup>438</sup>

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order that the people may be happy. We do battle to force them into the shape for which they are destined” (Salomon [one of the Freikorpsmen]). The people conform to its destined shape only if it is dominated by the men of “the nation.” Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 84.

<sup>438</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 17.

### Chapter 3: Pornotroping and the Bio/Necropolitics of Israel's Racial Libidinal Violence

*[A]ll power is based on an originary phantasm. The phantasm of power and the power of the phantasm consist in rubbing the two imaginaries of death and sexuality together, rubbing them constantly until they burst into fire.*<sup>439</sup>

*In the domain of our life excess manifests itself in so far as violence wins over reason.*<sup>440</sup>

*A normal people does not ask questions like 'will we always live by the sword', the sword is part of life.*<sup>441</sup>

#### Introduction: Biopower, Necropolitics, and Pornotroping

The latest Israeli war against Gaza (July 8<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014) – called *Operation Protective Edge* in Israel – sparked a fascinating biopolitical eugenistic trend for Israeli women who have recourse to Israel's sperm banks. Indeed, the Israeli daily *YNet* reported that "Each month some 60 women turn to the [Ramban] sperm bank at the Haifa hospital, and as many as half have asked for a donor with a history of combat service; before Operation Protective Edge, the request was rarely made."<sup>442</sup> In other words, during and shortly after the war, one women out of two required that, in addition to the usual criteria such as hair, eye and skin color, height, education, and health background, the sperm donor not only had some military experience, but also some "combat soldier background"; i.e. that the father of their future child had been in position(s), during his military service, where he could kill or be killed.<sup>443</sup> An article in the daily *Times of Israel* explained that "[Dina] Annipour [the director of the Ramban sperm bank laboratory] suggested that the ongoing military campaign in the Gaza Strip may have given many of the women new insights into what makes a man."<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 231.

<sup>440</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 41.

<sup>441</sup> Ariel Sharon, as quoted in Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 189.

<sup>442</sup> Yaron Kelner, "Gaza Fighting Prompts Spike in Demand for Soldier Sperm Donations - Israel News, Ynetnews."

<sup>443</sup> Winer, "Israeli Soldiers' Sperm in Hot Demand."

<sup>444</sup> One should also note that "The Ramban sperm bank is the "largest hospital in the north which supplies sperm donations to fertility clinics for the entire region." Ibid.

This recent anecdote illuminates with a contemporary light the intimacy and the intersection between necropolitics<sup>445</sup> (the politics of killing or disallowing life to the point of death) and biopolitics<sup>446</sup> (the politics of making live and optimizing certain forms of life) and their erotics. Necropolitics and biopolitics really are the two sides of a same coin of an economy of ‘life management’.

What remains more obscure however is their intimacy with virility, erotic and libidinal economies. Achille Mbembe recently summarized :

Power is pharmacy if only by its capacity to transform death’s resources in germinative forces – the transformation and conversion of death’s resources in a healing capacity. And it is with this double title of vital force and death principle that it is both revered and feared. But the relation between the vital principle and the one of death is fundamentally unstable. Giver of fertility and abundance, power [*pouvoir*] must be in full possession of its virile power [*puissance virile*].<sup>447</sup>

Keeping in mind the genealogical reading of the sabra, treated in Chapter 1, and the biopolitical economy of its bodily/embodiment (re)production, treated in Chapter 2, I here proceed with an analysis of processes of pornotroping – the cross fertilization of violence and sexuality<sup>448</sup> – in the Israeli-Palestinian settler colonial context. I do so by analyzing cultural artifacts – t-shirts designs, billboards, a social media meme widely circulated in Israel, and “selfies”.

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<sup>445</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, chap. 5; That is as the management of biological life of a population becomes the axiomatic of governmentality, wars themselves are waged in the name of making this biopolitically-defined life live. In other words, wars are almost always conceived as defensive enterprises waged under the logic that “society must be defended”. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 254; Hence, insofar as war is ultimately about killing an enemy threatening the population that must be defended, biopolitics in its extreme expression implies a necropolitics; bio- and necropolitics are the two sides of the same coin. Mbembe, “Necropolitics”; See also Braidotti, “Bio-Power and Necro-Politics.”

<sup>446</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*; See also Shapiro, “Life’s Contested Dispositifs” Here, the “living” is a contraction for human beings, and as such, we must acknowledge the anthropocentrism of his philosophy. Yet, for the purpose of this article, while acknowledging that the world of the “living” doesn’t start or end with humans, we will nevertheless heed with Foucault’s (in)famous concept.

<sup>447</sup> My translation from Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre* - N° 436, 195.

<sup>448</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6. I want to thank Sam Opondo for drawing my attention to the writings of A. Weheliye.

Importantly, most of these artifacts part of a visual libidinal economy are curated by the Israeli-American ran website *Mondoweiss*. The latter becomes a site of circulation for (and critique of) these visual cultural artifacts. As Alexander Weheliye underscores multiple times in *Habeas Viscus* (a text I dwell on in this chapter), the violence that produces blackness (but also the Arab/Palestinian “terrorist”) can’t be represented visually or textually in words or other forms of narration (film). It needs to be mediated visually or textually through sexuality (rape, (half)naked bodies, and so on). By curating, archiving, juxtaposing, and sharing these artifacts, this site allows me to proceed with my own montage in order to think pornotroping as the scene of necropolitics and biopolitics in the Israeli settler-colonial context.

In this context, it is worth asking if there is a specific logic whereby sacrificial forms of killing become an integral and necessary part of (re)production of the settler-colonial and colonized subjects? What is the function of sexuality in organizing the deployment of violence, war, torture, in sum, necropolitical modalities in a postcolonial settler colony? What can we learn about bio-/necro-politics if we remain attentive to “the grammar of the pornotrope”<sup>449</sup>? Can necropolitical means become objects of desire? If so, what are the implications of such a libidinal economy of death? How does the settler colonial political domination “activate a surplus and excess of sexuality that simultaneously sustains and disfigures said brutality?”<sup>450</sup> How does society or a population comes to literally *love* war so as to become excited every time it lurks around the corner, and thus, also, seeking and desiring it actively (although secretly)?

This chapter seeks to reflect on these questions without pretending to offer definitive answers. By analysing the erotics of visual cultural artifacts through the reading of their visual aesthetics produced in times of war, this chapter seeks to think the modalities through which the biopolitical and the necropolitical aspect of war come to colonize the Israeli settler-colonial imaginary as an erotic, reproductive, and eugenistic event. In this way, I hope to question how the Israeli-Jewish male and female bodies comes to mark the juncture between bio- and necro-politics, as the function of killing and reproducing itself literally become embodied in the same body.

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

More precisely, this chapter seeks to think the biopolitical function of pictures and their place (or complicity with) in the necropolitical economy of Israel-Palestine. As Jasbir Puar – amongst others – has showed images are often recruited and read by necropolitical regimes,<sup>451</sup> and I seek here to complement this reading with a reading that shows how they can also serve to reproduce a population (biopolitical function) and how these two functions work hand in hand in producing *bodies* and *flesh*. I am thus displacing Alexander Weheliye's – and before him Hortense Spiller's – site of inquiry of pornotroping from their focus on the black/enslaved body in pain to the pleasure, enjoyment, and *jouissance* of the settler-colonial, biopolitically qualified, chosen body as it experience the killing of the improperly born Palestinian.<sup>452</sup>

Part of the argument I want to put forth in this chapter is that during these episodes of warfare, the male and female bodies come to (re)play very gendered (hetero/homonormative) roles in the production of life and death. Doing so exposes the hypocrisy and tactical modalities of Israeli “pinkwashing”. The *intimacy* between the two (life/death) make even more apparent the close relationship between biopolitical ((re)production) and necropolitical (killing) economies. Killing (necropolitics) becomes literally an erotic and exciting “adventure”, a form of incitement (biopolitics) the reproduction and a sovereign affirmation of a certain form of settler-colonial life.

### **Pornotroping: Expenditure, Transgression, and Sovereignty**

Alexander Weheliye makes a very important point when he notes that Agamben's understanding of biopower evinces questions of intimacy between forms of sexuality and war (or sovereign violence). Indeed, Weheliye points out that “[r]ather than conceptualizing sadomasochism's bond with modern sovereignty as pornotroping—the catachrestic figuration of the sphere where political brutality bleeds into sexuality. Agamben's theory of biopolitics wields deviance, if only obliquely, as a way of locating both abnormal sexuality and fascism elsewhere.”<sup>453</sup> By reintroducing the question of eroticism, sexuality, and libidinal economies in

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<sup>451</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

<sup>452</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*; Spillers, “Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe.”

<sup>453</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6.

the slavery/plantation political economy, Weheliye is able to politicize space and sites that escaped problematization insofar as they remained in the realm of the “private” and thus problematize readings of racial difference and embodiment. This cross-fertilization of violence and sexuality is what the concept of “pornotroping” gestures to. According to Alexander Weheliye, “pornotroping reveals spectacularly how racial slavery and its afterlives in the form of the hieroglyphics of the flesh intimately bind blackness to queering and ungendering.”<sup>454</sup> Accordingly, a “continuum of ungendering” is produced by the colonial pornotroping matrix, and it is the latter that organizes and polices modern sexuality. Weheliye writes that “According to Spillers, within the defacing properties of enslavement ‘the gendered female exists for the male,’ while ‘the ungendered female—in an amazing stroke of pansexual potential—might be invaded/raided by another woman or man’.”<sup>455</sup> Weheliye’s argument echoes Jasbir Puar’s who noted the intimacy between the queering and racializing of bodies and populations on the lower parts of the biopolitical continuum, on its necropolitical extremity.<sup>456</sup>

At this extremity, the enslaved (and colonized) is no longer subject, but a *thing* (colonization = thingification). Eroticism and “ungendering” as thingification or objectification here become closely embedded in a slave/colonial matrix:

Slavery was necessarily a fiction and slaves never really stopped being men. But the fiction through which our ancestors looked on their fellow men as things is full of meaning. The fiction is conveyed essentially in the fact that human beings can be useful goods, objects of ownership and transaction. But inasmuch as they also alienated part of their rights to the sovereign totality, these same beings acquired the possibility of being a function of that totality, the erotic function, for example.<sup>457</sup>

Because pornotroping involves libidinal economies and eroticism, it becomes inevitably imbedded with bio/necropolitics. It is thus useful to turn to Mbembe – who adds notions of “transgression” and “expenditure” as key components of the sovereign’s bio/necro economy in the colony – to fully grasp the implication of pornotroping in the settler-colonial context.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

<sup>457</sup> Bataille, *The Accursed Share, Vols. 2 and 3*, 138.

<sup>458</sup> Here Mbembe is drawing heavily on the works of Georges Bataille.



Following his explanation of the bio/necropolitical articulation I have quoted above, he immediately writes that

It is thus one of the reason for which it [virile power] is at the centre of a vast network of exchange of women and clients. But, over everything else, it *must be able to kill*. Basically, we recognize it as much as by its capacity to engender as by the equivalent one of *transgression* [...] In certain cases, *killing* with one's own hand a human victim is the primary condition of any ritual of *regeneration*. [...] There is thus no power with its accursed share, a canaille share, a pig share, the same one that is rendered possible by a splitting in two [*dédoublement*], and that every time, comes at the price of a human life, the one of an enemy or, if necessary, [...] the one of a brother or a parent.<sup>459</sup>

Indeed, for Georges Bataille, Man is always between the status of a thing (*une chose*) (the exploited workers, the colonized)<sup>460</sup> and the status of the sovereign. One may experience sovereign moments, but death will inevitably take them away anyhow.<sup>461</sup> The sovereign is the one who allows himself to spend without purpose or aim for productivity; “purposeless expenditure” (*dépense improductive*). The latter refers to the part of energy spent by societies for non-productive purposes – “without expectations for profits”, the so-called “accursed share”.<sup>462</sup> Moreover, according to Bataille, every individual and every society receives an excess of energy, and it is this excess that must be spent without profit but creatively (hence for Bataille the importance of poesis and arts) if one does not want it to be spent to catastrophic ends (wars are a prime example he gives). The problem for the capitalist axiomatic is that all energy and resource must be spent to productive ends, and hoping to capitalize on what must be spent without purpose, our capitalist societies have classified this excess (“violent pleasure”) in the “pathological” realm. Thus opening the gate to forms of (or attempts) disciplining and control of excess. In a sense, the capitalist state seeks to capture this energetic flow for its own end, and the barrack/panopticon has been its model for channeling bodies and their excess to violent and productive means.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> My own translation from Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 195. My emphasis.

<sup>460</sup> Recalling Césaire's injunction to understand that “colonization = thingification”. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 42.

<sup>461</sup> It could thus be argued that sovereignty, for Bataille, is not an essence (ontological reality) but an event.

<sup>462</sup> Bataille, Georges., *The Accursed Share*; Protevi, *A Dictionary of Continental Philosophy*, 196.

<sup>463</sup> On the barrack and the panopticon, see Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*; For a more recent analysis of process of capture through the barrack (as the nomos of modern times) see Hoffman, *The War Machines*.

Hence, while notions of bio/necropolitics were always related with a governmentality that constantly aims at more efficiency and productivity, Bataille's concepts here above mentioned become particularly useful to think the bio/necropolitical beyond the efficiency rational, and into the realm of erotics, desire, and aesthetics.<sup>464</sup> In other words, one cannot think sovereignty without having to turn to this post-Kantian realm, beyond "reason", and into a world of desire and flows of energies.<sup>465</sup>

As such, the previous chapter traced the genealogy of the capture of European Jewish bodies and their energies for state and capitalism's productive ends, and, faithful to the barracks – the *nomos* of modernity – as their becoming warriors/soldiers.<sup>466</sup> The question becomes what happens when capture fails – and it inevitably does – and excess of soldiery bodily

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<sup>464</sup> Suffice to read Michel Foucault's short text published in the French daily *Le Monde* to grasp the centrality of Georges Bataille's works for his own: "What has not been said about this hypocritical, prudish bourgeois society, miserly with its pleasures, obstinate in its refusal to either recognize or name them? What has not been said about this most burdensome heritage received from Christianity-the sin of sex? And, what has not been said about the manner in which the 19th century made use of this heritage for economic ends: work rather than pleasure, the reproduction of forces rather than the pure discharge of energies?" Foucault and Winters, "The West and the Truth of Sex". Originally published in French as "L'Occident et la vérité du sexe," *Le Monde*, no 9885, 5 novembre 1976, p. 24.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. Michel Foucault. "A Preface to Transgression" in Foucault, Rabinow, and Hurley, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*; and Michel Foucault. "The Thought of the Outside" in *ibid.*, 150–151.

<sup>466</sup> In a sense, both Foucault and Bataille speak to the capitalist axiomatic. That is, Foucault pointed to the fact that bio-/necropolitics were forms of power and control that were consonant with capitalism's injunction and relentless quest for more productivity and efficiency, while Bataille and Deleuze remind us that capitalism also produces a desire for excess, for a proliferation of phantasms, capturing every facet of life, even death: "firstly a desire of consumption and secondly a desire for an absolute and unconditional expenditure." Hence, wars can be conceptualized here – contra the International Relations doxa – not so much as last resort tool for mediating difference in a world without supreme authority, but as what Bataille termed "violent pleasures". A form of transgression that finds its correlate in some forms of sadomasochistic "perverse sexualities", transgression that is at the center of the sovereign's ability for expenditure. It is about the insistence of capturing bodies and energies for sovereignty's purpose. The quote is my own translation from: "d'une part le désir de consommation et de l'autre le désir de la dépense absolue et inconditionnelle." in Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre*, 172.

erotic/libidinal energy escapes or overflows.<sup>467</sup> If the barracks has become the *nomos* of this postcolonial (redemptive movement) Zionist settler-colonial project – like many others, it must be said –, we need to think about how, in Israel/Palestine, “the economy of pleasure has become inseparable from vice.”<sup>468</sup>



**Figure 7: Israelis and media gather on the "hill of shame" to watch Israeli warplanes, drones, tanks, and artillery bombard the Gaza Strip, "clapping when blast are heard."**<sup>469</sup>

## War, the Gendering, and Ungendering of Bodies

*How many more orgasms will be had for Zionism?*<sup>470</sup>

### *Gendered Bodies*

*"[A] Jew always has a much higher soul than a gentile, even if he's gay."*

- Rabbi Eli Ben Dahan, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs in the current Israeli government, December 2013<sup>471</sup>

<sup>467</sup> G. Bataille writes "We use the word eroticism every time a human being behaves in a way strongly contrasted with everyday standards and behaviour. Eroticism shows the other side of a façade of unimpeachable propriety. Behind the façade are revealed the feelings, parts of the body and habits we are normally ashamed of." in Bataille, *Erotism*, 109.

<sup>468</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 127.

<sup>469</sup> Mackey, "Israelis Watch Bombs Drop on Gaza From Front-Row Seats."

<sup>470</sup> Rose, "How Many More Orgasms Will Be Had for Zionism?"

The Israeli homonationalist discourse about its liberal democracy and its relationship with gay rights (Pinkwashing) whereby its queer population is recruited in the bio-/necro- political project of excluding ethnic non-Jews has already made ink flow. Indeed, the rise of Israel's homonationalism – the “dual movement in which certain homosexual constituencies have embraced [Israeli] nationalist agendas and have also been embraced by nationalist agenda”<sup>472</sup> – has been at the center of the containment of criticism directed against its racist policies, illegal occupation, settlements development, and military offensives killing thousands of civilians such as Operation Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, and the latest one, Protective Edge.

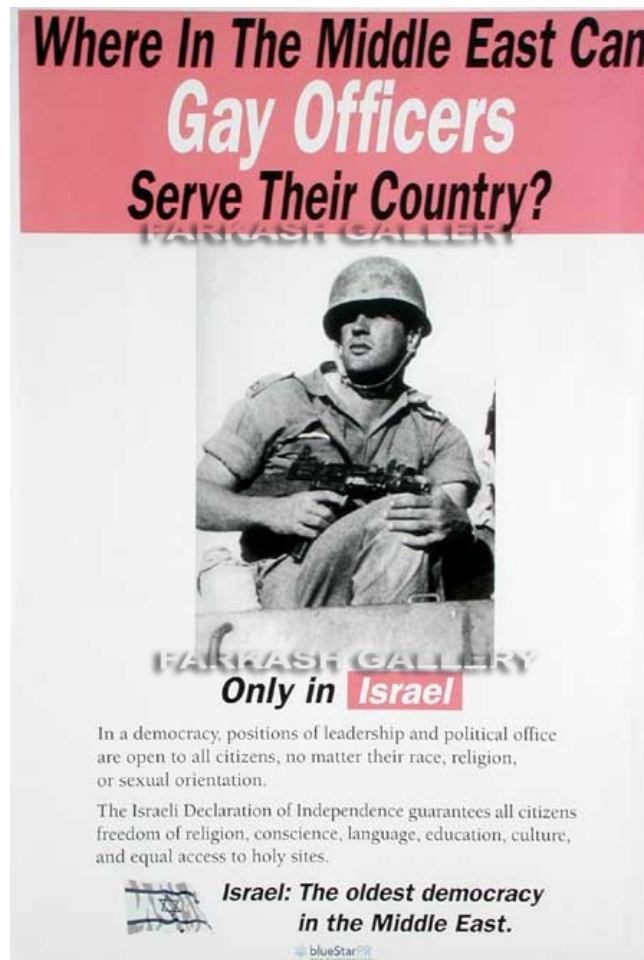
Since the late 80s and early 90s, Israel has adopted a gay-friendly policy (even within the army) and now markets itself as the “Middle East's gay capital”. Here, the Israeli democratic/liberal national subject is attached to a queer secularity (as exemplified by the Tel Aviv scene) and this liberal subject, as Puar points out, is constituted against “the very pathological irrational sexualities that are endemic to discourses of terrorist culpability”.<sup>473</sup> Here Israel is portrayed as the democratic, multicultural, gay-friendly ideal nation-state.

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<sup>471</sup> Kaufman, “Israeli Deputy Minister.”

<sup>472</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., 15.



**Figure 8: Israeli pinkwashing poster**

Obviously, this discourse rapidly – in the Israeli context – encounters spatial and religious limits; outside Tel Aviv, the fate of openly gay Israelis is quite uncertain as recent stabbings during the Jerusalem Gay Pride parade.<sup>474</sup> Yet, at an official state level Israel’s “liberal” and “democratic” queerness operates as a “white liberalist alibi”<sup>475</sup> complicit with the reproduction of the exceptionality of the Sabra and the modern Jewish-Israeli subject; a Jewish-Israeli subject who, as Eli Yishai (the then Minister of Interior of Israel) told us in an interview with an Israeli daily, is ultimately a *white* Occidental subject.<sup>476</sup>

<sup>474</sup> BBC, “Jerusalem Gay Pride.”

<sup>475</sup> Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 14.

<sup>476</sup> In 2012, Eli Yishai declared about migrants that “Most of those people arriving here are Muslims who think the country doesn’t belong to us, the white man.” Horowitz, Adam., “Israeli Interior Minister on African Immigrants”; Cf. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 24.

In conjunction to the already well-theorized Pinkwashing, a particular phenomenon attracted our attention during the last Israeli onslaught on Gaza during the summer of 2014.<sup>477</sup> Through the use of social media – especially Facebook – Israeli-Jewish (and sometimes Jewish American) women were taking pictures of themselves (“selfies”) in their underwear with the inscription “I ♥ IDF”.<sup>478</sup> The Facebook page of the group “Standing with IDF” organized this pictures collection as a device for moral cheering and support: “For all women who support IDF we need your help! Send us your photos and we'll anonymously post it to the page, we received a lot of thank you notes from IDF soldiers that thanks us and appreciate this kind of support lets make the smile on them face never get down [sic].”<sup>479</sup> Here, the phenomenon seems to be akin to the one of “sexting”. Only, in the latter, the erotic pictures are usually exchanged between two individuals through text messaging or private inbox e-mail accounts. Here however, these women are sexting their picture through social media, and thus making the targets of the message less obvious, if not multiple. This phenomenon thus articulates a certain form of bodily politics, whereby these Israeli/Jewish women eroticized a particular warring episode. One may also ask if it is not the event (warring episode) that in fact triggers such an erotic response from these women?

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<sup>477</sup> In fact, the 12<sup>th</sup> in a short time span. See Filiu, “The Twelve Wars on Gaza.”

<sup>478</sup> See publicly available pictures on the Facebook group page “Standing With IDF” (at the time of writing this chapter, the group boasted 33,737 followers).

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.



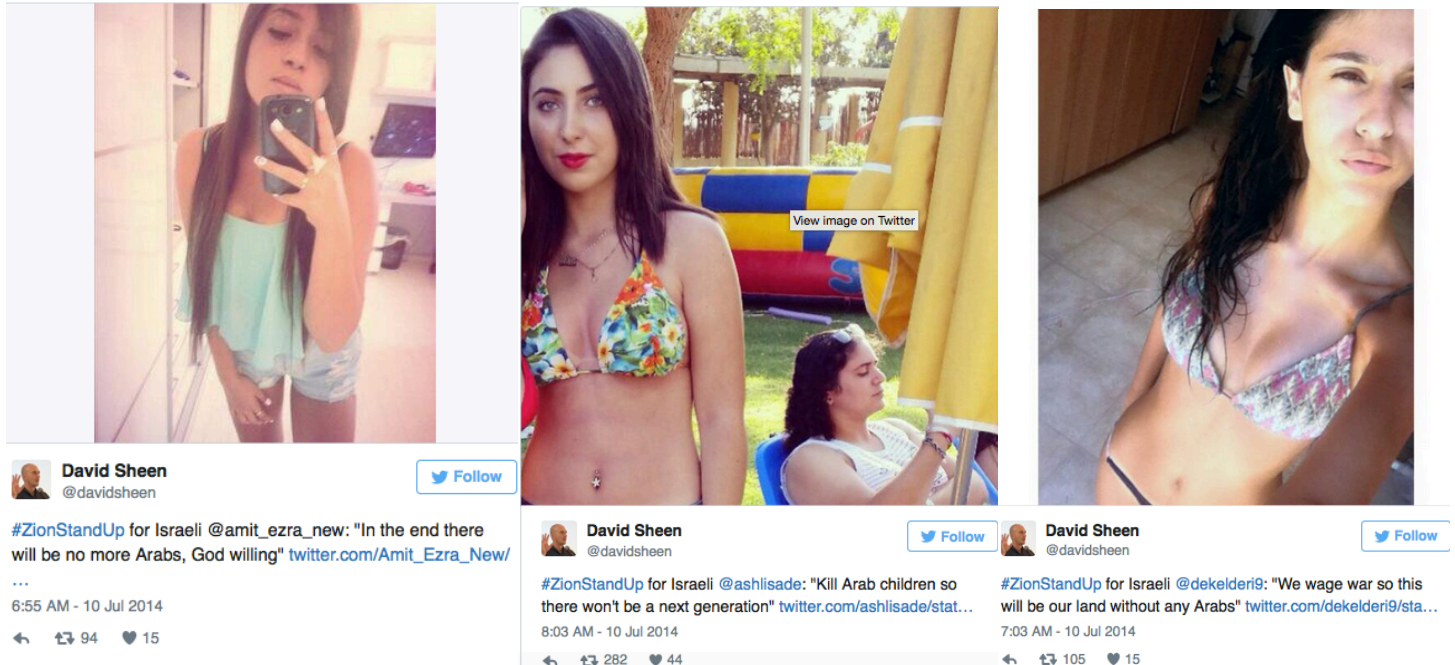
**Figures 9 and 10: The cover and the profile pictures (respectively) of the Facebook group page "Standing with IDF".**

Similarly, a few weeks before this social media erotic movement, another popular social media movement had taken place. That is a few days before the Israeli military operation, the bodies of three Israeli settlers who had been kidnapped in the West Bank were found by the Israeli security services. In response to the assassination of the settlers, Israeli teenage girls – “pre-Army Israeli teens” as a *Mondoweiss* journalist calls them – started “twitting” and sharing “selfies” (often in suggestive dresses or poses) while joining to the picture a racist, xenophobic, and hateful captions. Some of these included “Death to these fucking Arabs”, “I wish a painful death to Arabs,” “From the bottom of my heart, I wish for Arabs to be torched,” “In the end there will be no more Arabs, God willing,” “I spit on you, you stinking Arabs,” “We wage war so this will be our land without any Arabs,” “Arabs may you be paralyzed & die with great suffering!,” and perhaps even more revealing for the subject of this chapter, “Kill them already, Arabs are whores,” “Arabs are not human, they're beasts,” “Death to Arabs you son of a whore,” “Kill Arab children so there won't be a next generation,” and “Death to all of you Arabs you transfags.”<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> The independent journalist did a great job at following and tracking these kinds of tweets during the Operation Protective Edge. See Sheen, David., “Terrifying Tweets of Pre-Army Israeli Teens.”





**Figures 11, 12, and 13: Selfies with homophobic, racist, xenophobic captions shared by their authors on Tweeter and reshared by the journalist David Sheen.**

As far as the caption goes, the message appears to be strait forward. The question raised for me here is more about the montage and dispersion of such caption coupled with a picture of an eroticized body. Indeed, we are left to ask to whom are these tweets directed? If the caption appears at first to be directed to the “Arab” enemy, the image suggests that the eroticized gendered body is primarily for the Israeli male soldiers (as the “Standing for IDF” Facebook group suggests). Could the eroticized Israeli-Jewish woman body be the media that conveys both, the biopolitical message (to the IDF), and the necropolitical message (to the Palestinians)? The Israeli daily *Times of Israel*’s take on the “Stand with IDF” seemed to suggest so by formulating the title of its article covering the phenomenon with the double-entendre “Israeli women do *Gaza strip* for IDF (italics mine)” and classifying the article in the “dirty war” section.<sup>481</sup> Here the women is literally *Gaza stripping*. As Kathy Ferguson pointed out, heeding the work of Elise Young,<sup>482</sup> it is possible to “analyze women as an occupied territory” and there are instances of racist violence where gender plays a big part. Young, for instance, describes the killing of seven and wounding of ten Gazans by an Israeli citizens who, after demanding their ID

<sup>481</sup> Times of Israel Staff, “Israeli Women Do Gaza Strip for IDF | The Times of Israel”; See also Fernandez, Belen, “Make Love and War.”

<sup>482</sup> Young, *Keepers of the History*.



cards, proceeded to open fire on them with an automatic rifle. In that particular case for instance, “The media further reports ‘that the murderer is himself a victim – of unrequited love. He told his girlfriend that if she would not take him back, he would go out and kill. Palestinians and women became confused in his mind.’”<sup>483</sup> The “Gaza Strip” thus has a double meaning – territorial *and* biological – and a double erotics that aligns with the mutual production of pleasure and pain, life and death. Making love and making war, in this libidinal economy, overlap with one another, are embedded with one another, become confused.<sup>484</sup>

Maybe, we should not hold the divide between the two messages. Maybe, there is only one message, where, through some sort of “mad reverie, love and death, sex and murder” are confused with one another?<sup>485</sup> Indeed, as the *Times of Israel* article revealed, Gavriel Devo – the man behind the Facebook group – made explicit the connection between war and eroticism when he noted that “‘We have two bountiful resources in Israel that are impossible to compete with, Israeli minds and the most beautiful women in the world,’ Beyo explained in a post on Facebook. ‘We also have a military front so... why not combine the two?’ he added. Besides, what chance does Hamas have in the face of our women?”<sup>486</sup> Here the locus of propriety (“we have two resources”, “our women”) reveals that Israeli men/soldiers feel entitled to Israeli women (and Palestinian women as well by colonial extension). There is nothing new there. However, what is new, as Simona Sharoni pointed out is that “is the fact that this entitlement is embraced publicly by women.”<sup>487</sup> As one Canadian journalist commenting the *Times of Israel* article wrote: “Other recent Israeli headlines, such as *Haaretz* ‘In Gaza, Israel sits uncomfortably between S&M and soft power,’ raise the question of why the media doesn’t just announce that the IDF is fucking Gaza.”<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 447.

<sup>484</sup> I am indebted to Sam Opondo for his contribution to this reading.

<sup>485</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich in Foreword to Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, xvi.

<sup>486</sup> Times of Israel Staff, “Israeli Women Do Gaza Strip for IDF | The Times of Israel.”

<sup>487</sup> As quoted in Shams, Alex., “Israeli Discourse of Sexualized Violence Rises amid Gaza Assault.”

<sup>488</sup> Fernandez, Belen., “Make Love and War.”

In these warring moments, it appears that the bodies of women are part of the Israeli arsenal presenting the women as a gendered heteronormative and eugenistically “chosen body”<sup>489</sup>. In other words, war against Palestinians becomes a tool in reproducing these heteronormative bodies. While the colonized woman’s body is presented as ungendered *how does that work?*, the settler’s women bodies are highly gendered, as Spillers notes, “the gendered female exists for the male,” and “the ungendered female—in an amazing stroke of pansexual potential—might be invaded/raided by another woman or man.”<sup>490</sup> The settler women are also producing an erotic excitement directed at the soldier, reminding them what they are fighting for, and producing an excess that may be transferred in violence in combat. The pictures are acting as a reminder that these women are also fighting their fight on the home front, keeping their bodies (and reproductive apparatus) for those who fight at the war front, not being conquered by the “softheads” and “yuppies” who wait cowardly behind the lines.<sup>491</sup> Is the mobilization of these women’s bodies the sign of an injunction of their part, asking male soldiers that – if they want a taste of their bodies – they must carry their mission to the end? Are these “pre-army teens” joining the fight in their own way?

Amongst other things, it is possible to read these “selfies” as gesturing to the “white liberal” alibi whereby these sexually active, almost naked, “liberated” bodies serve to mark the contrast between veiled or fully clothed Palestinian/Arab/Muslim women and “emancipated” Israeli women: its boobs-n-arses-washing. While the previous chapter pointed to the erotization of the Zionist connection between ethnationally-qualified bodies (Jews) and the land through programs such as Birthright, here what is eroticized is literally Israel’s “at war” condition. Just like Pinkwashing, which, as Puar noted, erases the violence performed against the indigenous population by reifying Israel “liberal democratic” identity, these pictures of young females almost naked bodies seem to be part of the equation of moralizing the wanton use of violence against innocents. It is the other side of pinkwashing, whereby the heteronormativity of a

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<sup>489</sup> They are the women equivalent the Sabra “chosen body”, as discussed by Weiss, *The Chosen Body*; See also Kathy Ferguson’s reading of an Israeli postcard picturing women in military uniforms alongside a “sabra” cactus in Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 439.

<sup>490</sup> Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe,” 222.

<sup>491</sup> Israeli-Jewish citizens opposing the war and occupation (often identified as « leftists ») have also been the targets of such tweets and selfies.

“normal” nation is reified against the queer and deviant population that can be abandon and killed. For Jews and Westerners attached to the heteronormative norm and gendered role of the Western (Jewish) body, the sexualization of these young girls achieves the same function. This form of sexualized and gendered violence reinscribes Israel in the “civilizational” or “Western” realm by playing both on the homonationalist (presenting Palestinian victims as LGBTQs deviant victimizers) and the heteronormative registers. Indeed, the heteronormative part is equally important. For instance, already in 2007, research conducted by the Israeli U.S. consulate “indicated that Israel meant very little to young US men.” To remedy to this “public relation” problem, the consulate decided to reach out to these men “by publishing images of semi-clad female former soldiers in US men's magazine, Maxim” in order “to improve the image of the country within the US.”<sup>492</sup> Israeli “gals” were recruited as a gendered military tool.<sup>493</sup>

As such, these images act the same way pinkwashing is working in Israel: by casting the Arab male as morally defective, effeminate, and sexually deviant (as their captions suggest) and Arab women as failed femininity (performing manly tasks, bearing terrorist to be children) it hides the extreme and gratuitous bombing of “brown” innocents behind a wall of pinkwashed-yet-heteronormative “sexual exceptionalism” that moralize and eroticizes Israeli violence as ethical/moral/legitimate, no matter the outcome.

Furthermore, the veil seems to be understood by the white liberal alibi as not that which hides the object of desire – the women’s body – but rather that which hides the body that must not be touched/sexualized. As Puar writes, the “sexually exceptional subject is produced against queerness, as a process intertwined with racialization, that call into nominalization abject populations peripheral to the project of living, expendable as human waste and shunted to the spaces of deferred death.”<sup>494</sup> Hence, the Arab’s sexuality is often present as deviant – i.e. that which is object is not the norm (heteronormativity) – zoophilia being a common one

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<sup>492</sup> BBC, “Israel Targets US Lad Mag Market.”

<sup>493</sup> In fact, this is actually a relatively old tactic. Already in 1995, Kathy Ferguson pointed to this process, but the cultural artefact analyzed in her writing was not “lads magazines” but Israeli postcard. See Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 439–441.

<sup>494</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxvii.

(‘goatfuckers’<sup>495</sup>, etc.). It is in large part this transgressive sexuality that authorizes its exclusion from the circle of humanity, while at the same time, its killing requires another transgression that eroticizes its death. As such, these pornotropic wartimes selfies serve as a strict re-ordering of the male/female and hetero/queer divides, contrasting with the ungended slave and colonized bodies.

### ***Ungended Palestinian/Arab/Terrorist Flesh***

*The same hatred of aliens. The same preparedness for violence. The same wounded manhood.*<sup>496</sup>

As we have noted above, pornotroping helps us to grasp how racial, settler-colonial eugenistic and warring policies are intimately bound with ungending, queering, and the transformation (disembodiment) of the body *qua* flesh. It is to these “ungended” bodies that I now want to turn, or, more precisely, to Israeli pornotropic cultural artifacts depicting these bodies – “desexualizing and devivifying ‘the mass’”<sup>497</sup> as Theweleit put it – and situating them in the warring libidinal economy of violence. Like Weheliye’s analysis for “black subjects”, the potential of such analysis is to “unearth the pivotal role the sexualized ungending of the [Arab/Palestinian/terrorist] subject plays in modernity.”<sup>498</sup>

It is worth recalling that, in the eyes of the eugenistic ethnonational biopolitical Israeli-Zionist project of a “Jewish State” (explored in the previous Chapter 2) the *prohibition* of, and anxiety over mix-marriage and heterogamous (Jewish/Arab) relationships calls for sadistic forms of *transgression*.<sup>499</sup> That is, Israel’s “national directive to have children so that they can grow up to become soldiers.”<sup>500</sup> In other words, Israel’s biopolitical policing of intimacies – the taboo of inter-marriage and the incitement (imperative) of monogamous Jewish sexual intercourses,

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<sup>495</sup> On ISIS muslim/arab fighters as “goatfuckers”, see Weinstein, Adam, “Your ISIS Goat-Fucking Drone Video” Popular culture, such as Dennis Dugan film starring Adam Sandler also hint to the “goatfucker” racist stereotype.

<sup>496</sup> Lindquist, *Exterminate All the Brutes*, 153.

<sup>497</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 97.

<sup>498</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6.

<sup>499</sup> Judith Butler herself used the term “sadistic” in Judith Butler, “Judith Butler’s Remarks to Brooklyn College on BDS.”

<sup>500</sup> Sheen, “Degenerate Culture.”

relationships, and marriage – the relationship with otherness is confined to the realm of transgression. It is thus worth turning to George Bataille conceptualization of the relationship between death, violence and erotics to understand how the anxiety over heterogamous “Arab”/Palestinian-Jewish/Israeli play out in the settler-colonial warring and libidinal imaginary. The Sadist’s eroticism, as Bataille explains,

runs counter to the desires of other people (of almost all others, that is); they are to be victims, not partners. De Sade makes his heroes uniquely self-centered; the partners are denied any rights at all: this is the key to his system. If eroticism leads to harmony between the partners its essential principle of violence and death is invalidated. Sexual union is fundamentally a compromise, a half-way house between life and death. Communion between the participants is a limiting factor and it must be ruptured before the true violent nature of eroticism can be seen, whose translation into practice corresponds with the notion of the sovereign man. The man subject to no restraints of any kind falls on his victims with the devouring fury of a vicious hound.<sup>501</sup>

As Georges Bataille noted, often, if this energy does not come out in a sexual act or aesthetic practices (arts), it might erupt as violence and/or excess.<sup>502</sup> Historically, it found its expression in the form of the colonist desire for the colonized women, of a violent expression and need for penetration of the unattainable and proscribed colonized body.<sup>503</sup> Hence, as Yael Berda reminded us, “the desire for the exotic other and his appropriation. Racism becomes more pronounced the greater the desire for appropriation is. In the delirious colonial encounter, the colonizer wants to separate, enclose and protect himself, yet is attracted to the other through the senses as to entertainment or to a cooking spice.”<sup>504</sup> In other words, the occupation is all about eroticism – proximity, sweat, contact, and etc. – and this deep and constant mingling of bodies confronts the eugenistic and biopolitical taboo articulated by the “demographic threat” discourse and imperative. The libidinal and erotic tension created by the occupation thus finds transgressive expiatory courses that are rewarded in a society where this form of transgression and expenditure becomes a way of constructing one’s own social capital and status. In other word, in order to remain the object of the sovereign, the erotic settler-colonial desire for the

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<sup>501</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 167.

<sup>502</sup> “Its shape and its object do change; but whether it is a question of sexuality or death, violence, terrifying yet fascinating, is what it is levelled at.” Ibid., 51.

<sup>503</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*.

<sup>504</sup> Berda, “The Erotics of the Occupation | Ma’arav.”

colonized must be directed *contra* the desire of the latter (Palestinians), making them *victims*, not partners, of the Israeli settler and ethno-national state phantasy.

Indeed, while this “desire for inseminating or penetrating desirable bodies for the purpose of reproduction,” “sensual delight,” “pleasure,” “happiness,” is, as Achille Mbembe notes, not the sole libidinal desire of the Phallus. The goal of this libido must also be “found in suffering, unhappiness, and extreme forms of physical degeneration” whereby the “transfiguration of pain, suffering and unhappiness that, by freeing the subject from various kinds of inhibition, allow him or her to achieve a capacity for ecstasy unachievable under ordinary conditions.”<sup>505</sup> I thus now want turn to cultural artifacts that reveal the intimacy between the Israeli warring ventures as transgressive episodes where death and sexuality (pornotroping) are closely related, ungendering and suffering of the suffering flesh of the Palestinian/Arab/Terrorist population.<sup>506</sup> As a viscous fleshy presence, these Palestinian and Gazan suffering (but also, at time, joyful<sup>507</sup>) bodies reminds the settlers that, by persisting and living, their biopolitical and Modern fantasy of “the One” is just that: a fantasy. This is in no way an exoticization or a romanticization of the current plight of the Gazans. It is simply the assertion that “habeas viscus” or the law of the flesh is in fact, “an extrajudicial law of motion”<sup>508</sup> that can’t be totally erased by the state (*stasis*) and the capitalist axiomatic/capture.

Perhaps, the most telling example of pornotroping as the scene of choice of bio/necropolitics was the widely circulated image on social media of a veiled – we understand is Palestinian – women lying on a bed draped with Hamas’ colors, showing her legs in a suggestive position, and sporting high heels (Figure 11).<sup>509</sup> As the inscription on her breast reveals, the partly naked woman, lying on a green sheet, already submitted and ready to receive the Phallus is

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<sup>505</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 212.

<sup>506</sup> G. Bataille made the distinction between “flesh” and humanity by associating the latter with animality. He write: “it is always a question of countering animal disorderliness with the principle of perfect humanity, for which the flesh and animality do not exist.” Bataille, *The Accursed Share, Vols. 2 and 3*, 55–56.

<sup>507</sup> See for instance the Gaza surfers, who, through this joyful practice of an aquatic activity without any other purpose than “fun”, are resisting occupation is imagined by the Israeli political and military establishment. See also Junka-Aikio, *Late Modern Palestine*.

<sup>508</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 124.

<sup>509</sup> Sheen, “Israel’s War Against Gaza’s Women & Their Bodies.”

a metaphor for Gaza. The captions above and below the image read: “Bibi, finish inside this time! Signed, citizens in favor of a ground assault.” The image was widely circulated on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp by supporters of a ground assault; assault that would, according to them, “restore the quiet in the south” once and for all.



**Figure 14: Widely circulated picture on social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter of support for ground invasion of Gaza: "Bibi, finish inside this time! Signed, citizens in favor of a ground assault."**

What this pictured eroticized (part veiled, part unveiled) woman representing Gaza suggest, is that, from an Israeli perspective, this form of violent sexual/eroticized assault is what Gazans (or the colonized) desires. It represent their sexual desires and hopes as deviant and waiting for the biopolitically chosen (God's) Israeli Phallus (the IDF and its guns) to come inside and deliver its ordinance. Gaza is literally the colonized woman upon which Israel constructs its virile and manly sexuality; a transgression for its sovereignty. The war on terror literally becomes the extension of the colonial erotic drive to penetrate a chaotic and exotic place of darkness. Only, there is no respite after the act; there is no “tension-and-release, but tension-and-

explosion.”<sup>510</sup> The death of the ‘enemy’ is eroticized and literally becomes the moment of *jouissance*, of emancipation, of sovereignty. The veiled and “asking-for-it” women icon of the picture becomes the figure by which Palestinian victims – males/females, civilians/military, adults/children – are eroticized, ungendered and ultimately produced as a legitimate target: flesh.

They’re certainly eroticized, but I don’t see “ungendered.”

Let us now turn to a city sponsored banner in support of the IDF troops fighting in Gaza placed in the city square of Or Yehuda by the council. The banner addressed the soldiers fighting: “Israeli soldiers, the residents of Or Yehuda are with you! Pound their mother and come back home safely to your mother.” Here, we learn that the Gazan woman is also a mother. Palestinian mothers are the women responsible for putting to life these “little snakes”<sup>511</sup>, these (and here I am rephrasing one of Theweleit’s *freikorpsmen*) Palestinian whores and their menfolk laying waste to the pure Jewish body of the mother.<sup>512</sup> Kill the parasite and what gives it birth, and come back to your host, the “heroic mother”.<sup>513</sup> In a post on her official Facebook page,<sup>514</sup> the Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked wrote that “the entire Palestinian people is the enemy” and that Israel should include in its list of bombing targets “elderly and its women, its cities and its villages, its property and its infrastructure.” In sum, the entire queered population and its life-sustaining infrastructure is the target. The Arab/Palestinian mother bearing a child has her own place in declaration of the Israeli lawmaker: “Now this also includes the mothers of the martyrs, who send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there.”<sup>515</sup> The queered Palestinian population is identified as a pathologically terroristic before birth.

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<sup>510</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, 44.

<sup>511</sup> Israeli Justice Minister, Ayalet Shaked, see Tharoor, “Israel’s New Justice Minister Considers All Palestinians to Be ‘the Enemy.’”

<sup>512</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, 87.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, 91.

<sup>514</sup> Shaked, “שנה 12 לפני נכתב, שנגנז ל”ז אליצור אורי של מאמר - שקד איילת”

<sup>515</sup> Full Translation is available at Abuminah, Ali., “Israeli Lawmaker Calls for Genocide of Palestinians Gets Thousands of Facebook Likes.”



If we heed Klaus Theweleit's thesis alongside Alexander Weheliye's insight, this other parasitic mother (the Palestinians' in this case) is a castrating woman. They are women with manlike attributes, – “imbued with either a surplus (hyperfemininity or hypermasculinity) of gender and sexuality or a complete lack thereof (desexualization)”<sup>516</sup> – threatening the men's virility. These veiled women are read as always ready to pull out from under their chador or niqab a phallic attribute that will in turn castrate them.<sup>517</sup> Here, the gun is not a mere prosthetic phallus. The weapon *is* a phallus. And conversely, the phallus *is* a weapon. Hence, she must be castrated, put back to her place, before she castrates the Israeli herself.<sup>518</sup> It is thus a question of self-defense, and the IDF is thus, of course, “the most moral army in the world”.<sup>519</sup>



**Figure 15: Or Yehuda's city council sponsored banner supporting IDF troops fighting in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge: "Israeli soldiers, the residents of Or Yehuda are with you! Pound 'their mother and come back home safely to your mother."**

<sup>516</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6.

<sup>517</sup> Ironically, as seen in the previous chapter and as pointed out by Daniel Boyarin, the Jewish women was long considered by European anti-semites as a castrating women with masculine attributes and manners. Similarly, as Hortense Spillers notes, the enslaved Afro-American matriarcal figure overwhelming “strength” and “dominance” came to be understood by both, blacks and whites, as pathological. See Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 1997; and Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe,” 74.

<sup>518</sup> Theweleit writes “On that level, the murders of the women appear to be castrations, arising out of the men’s own fear of being castrated. In this psychodynamic process, the dominant motif is defense. The wound into which the women is transformed appears here as a castration wound.” Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, 195.

<sup>519</sup> “terror against a woman who isn’t identified with the mother/sister image is essentially self-defense.” Ibid., vol. 1, 183. *Italic in original.*

In regards to Israel's most recent warring episodes on Gaza (Operations 'Cast Lead,' 'Pillar of Defense,' and 'Defensive Shield') one cultural artifact that is available to us is the Israeli combat soldier t-shirts. These t-shirt drawings offer visual aesthetics that translate the military acts as a prolongation of the medical arm (as argued in the previous chapter). The designs on those t-shirt are not empty of sexualized and gendered (and ungendering) content and are thus useful to explore the intimacy and conviviality between masculinity, racism, nationalism, sexuality and violence. While admittedly shocking, they help us to grasp how, as Puar puts it, "discourses of counterterrorism are intrinsically gendered, raced, and sexualized and [how] they illuminate the production of imbricated normative patriot and terrorist corporealities that cohere against and through each other"<sup>520</sup>; how, the phantasm of phallic superiority of the Sabra consists in rubbing these two together until violence ensues.<sup>521</sup> That is, their aesthetic of *vulgarity*, *obscenity*, and *madness* should not be trivialized or brushed aside as the expression of 'irrationality' or 'rebel elements' within a larger, 'more moderate', population.

The website *Mondoweiss* described a t-shirt produced by the Lavi battalion (a West Bank based anti-terrorist army unit) "featuring a drawing of a [Israeli] soldier next to a young woman with bruises, and the slogan, 'Bet you got raped!'"<sup>522</sup> The website also reported that another t-shirt design stating "'Let every Arab mother know that her son's fate is in my hands!'" had previously been banned for use on another infantry unit's shirt. A Givati soldier said this week, however, that at the end of last year, his platoon printed up dozens of shirts, fleece jackets and pants bearing this slogan."<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxiv.

<sup>521</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 231.

<sup>522</sup> Horowitz, "Racist and Sexist Israeli Military Shirts Show the Mindset That Led to War Crimes in Gaza | Mondoweiss."

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.



**Figures 16 and 17: IDF t-shirts designs**

The sexual content of these t-shirts designs becomes even more obvious when we look other models. One of them (Figure 16) depicts a young boy holding a sniper carbine that is too big for him. The Palestinian (if we assume he is), is depicted as childlike, immature, and not in age of manoeuvring a manly, phallic-like, erected gun. Again, a sniper aim or scope is depicted around him with the crosshair on “target”. The text reads: “The smaller, the tougher!”; a phrase that once again points to the sexual content of the drawing. (The smaller the target it, the tougher it is to snipe, but also, the smaller your prick, the tougher it is to get laid or perform the penetrating act).

The Figure 17 presents the crosshair again. However, its circle plays the function of representing a condom (as the inscription “Durex” allows to understand). In the circle, being targeted is a veiled Arab women kneeling and crying in front of her dead baby (still wearing a diaper), shot in the head by the Israeli sniper. Again, in both those t-shirts’ drawings we find references to phallic contest or castration (the condom as a form of castration/contraception associated with the killing of the baby (itself associated with the issue of the “demographic threat” discourse)). In a similar manner to the image circulating on WhatsApp demanding PM Netanyahu to “come inside”, the Palestinian woman is “encoded with a ‘femininity’ behind

which lies concealed the “castrating and/or murderous (ungendered) monster”<sup>524</sup> The design could also mean that if IDF soldiers are intending on using their penis during missions in Occupied Territories and have sex with an Arab women, they should use a condoms, for who knows what kind of disease they could catch, or worse, following the act an hybrid monster could come to life nine months later?

In any case, weapons and phallus are conflated with one another. Hence, either rape is seen as a possible outcome or tactic, or it is equated with killing (penetration in both cases). Another design not presented here, that goes on the “graduation” shirt of those who have completed the sniper course depicting a Palestinian baby who goes on to grow into a combative teen and eventually an armed man. The inscription reads: “No matter how it begins, we will put an end to it.”



**Figures 18 and 19: IDF t-shirt designs**

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<sup>524</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 27.

The Figure 18 above represents an Israeli soldier blowing up a minaret to pieces. The representation of the latter reminds us of a phallus, and hence, the drawing can be interpreted as an act of castration and/or emasculation. The soldier thus appears as part of the apparatus of eugenic control, dealing a blow to the infrastructure that sustains a population that does not fit the body politic. In another (Figure 19), a veiled pregnant Arab woman holding an AK-47 in the left hand is the target of an Israeli sniper crosshair who's passed his marksman test (the t-shirt is part of the reward). The crosshair is aimed directly at the belly of the pregnant woman. Below the design on the t-shirt, we can read the inscription "1 Shot 2 Kills". Here again, and especially in this case, the pathologizing and queering/ungendering of the entire Israeli-Palestinian, Palestinian (and to a larger extent Arab) population as terrorist bodies or bodies bearing the root of terrorism surfaces. Once more, the Israeli soldier is positioned as the defender of the body politic (through controlling/killing Palestinian populations). On an implicit level, one could argue that the very fact that the victim is a woman bearing a child underscores that the t-shirt is actually aimed at the "Arab" man and his phallic capacity for reproduction. However, this reading simply reinscribes the Arab/Palestinian women as a passive site for both Arab and Israeli/Jewish men. The Arab woman only appears to be the passive contested space of a phallic colonization. The two t-shirts drawing above are basically about a phallic contest and the construction of masculinity that would represent the superiority of a nation or race over another.

As in the Gaza half naked women picture, the woman here appears to be an ungendering trope. Women bodies are also always presented as sites of failed femininity *and* motherhood. Hence, not only is this discourse racist, but it is also gendering and defining (limiting) the role of women to child bearers and to the household. The hypocrisy behind pinkwashing here stands out significantly. In all cases, the result is the ungendering of the Palestinian/Arab/Terrorist so as to relegate it to the realm of the "flesh", of "bare life". Indeed, by bearing witness to the becoming naked life or flesh, these pornotropic cultural artifacts participate in the creation of the

Palestinian *qua* flesh.<sup>525</sup> This points to the intimacy between the experience of this body in flesh, of its material energy and the question of *transgression*.<sup>526</sup>

It is also important to note here the mobilization of the figure of the Palestinian child in these t-shirt designs (3 out of 4 figures above display at least one, if we include the foetus in Figure 19). In fact, if we pair these t-shirt designs with the anecdote on sperm banks opening this chapter and read it through the lens of pornotroping it becomes evident that childhood is conflated with ungendered flesh. This child *qua* flesh represents a site of various potentialities (the foetus is the prime example) that are from the start doomed to fail for racial but also cultural (mothering) failure. The figure of the mother, which accompanies the child in these visual artifacts, thus becomes the site where deviance inevitably emerges. One may also add the very recent anecdotal declaration by the Israeli Knesset member (Habayit Hayehudi party) Bezalel Smotrich who defended segregation in Israeli hospitals by saying that he did not “want his wife lying next to a woman whose baby will murder his child in another 20 years.”<sup>527</sup> Hence, pornotroping reappears through the trope of the “womenandchildren” in order to mark the entire population as improperly born, and thus, condemned to a necropolitical life towards death. The biopolitical pendant of this is that “targeted strike” can be conceptualized, at least implicitly, as “targeted reproduction”.

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<sup>525</sup> As Weheliye writes, “visual instantiations of naked life or the hieroglyphics of flesh. Pornotroping is thus not a mere by-product of an already existing state but integral to the creation of the flesh.” in Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6.

<sup>526</sup> “In Artaud, when all of discursive language is constrained to come undone in the violence of the body and the cry, and when thought, forsaking the wordy interiority of consciousness, becomes a material energy, the suffering of the flesh, the persecution and rending of the subject itself; and in Bataille, when thought ceases to be the discourse of contradiction or the unconscious, becoming the discourse of the limit, of ruptured subjectivity, transgression;” in Michel Foucault. “The Thought of the Outside” in Foucault, Rabinow, and Hurley, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 151.

<sup>527</sup> Lis, “Israeli Lawmaker on Hot Seat After Justifying Hospital Segregation of Jewish, Arab Birth Mothers.”



**Figure 20: t-shirt design depicting Ismail Haniyeh being raped by the mascot of an IDF unit.**

Figure 19, above, a t-shirt design for an Israeli brigades participating in Operation Cast Lead representing a vulture anal-raping Hamas' Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh (depicted as fat and hairy). The rape analogy presented here (and above in this section of the chapter) has been considered seriously and concretized in rape threats or rape as possible foreign policy. Indeed, in 2014, the Israeli Middle East scholar at Bar-Ilan University, Mordechai Kedar, affirmed that "The only thing that can deter terrorists, like those who kidnapped the children and killed them, is the knowledge that their sister or their mother will be raped."<sup>528</sup> In the past few years, left-leaning Israeli women activists have been increasingly subject to settler sexual violence (coming from both men *and* women). One Israeli activist described her experience: "Hellenist [derogatory term for Jew who betrays her religion]. Arabs fuck her in the ass.' I want to get away. To run. I retreat quickly with my back to the path and my front to the attackers. Afraid to turn my back on them. One approaches too closely and rubs his crotch: 'I'll fuck you.' He was serious."<sup>529</sup>

<sup>528</sup> Kashti, "Israeli Professor's 'Rape as Terror Deterrent' Statement Draws Ire."

<sup>529</sup> The events were document originally in Hebrew by the Israeli scholar and blogger Idan Landau. Quotes were translated and reposted in English in Richard Silverstein, "Anatot Pogrom Victims Suffered Sexual Abuse."



Bellow, and dating from 2006, Figure 16 presents the design created for soldiers from the ‘Carmon Team’ course for elite-unit marksmen printed on shirts. It depicts a drawing of a knife-wielding Palestinian in the crosshairs of a gun sight, and the slogan, “You've got to run fast, run fast, run fast, before it's all over.” Below this first drawing is another one depicting an Arab women weeping over a grave and the inscription: “And afterward they cry, and afterward they cry.” As *Mondoweiss* commented, these inscriptions constitute riffs on a popular Israeli song.<sup>530</sup> Here again, although the one dying is a male Palestinian, the ultimate victim in this short illustrated story is the women who cry the loss of their sons. The desire for the Other’s women is coupled with the act of putting an end to her biopolitical reproduction (death of the children, almost always a son).



**Figure 21: IDF t-shirt design**

These t-shirts designs thus points to a very similar direction than the one indicated by Achilles Mbembe when he discusses the colonial domination as a phallic one. It is worth quoting at length here:

During the colonial era and its aftermath, phallic domination has been all the more strategic in power relationships, not only because it is based on a mobilization of the

<sup>530</sup> Horowitz, “Racist and Sexist Israeli Military Shirts Show the Mindset That Led to War Crimes in Gaza | *Mondoweiss*.”



subjective foundations of masculinity and femininity but also because it has direct, close connections with the general economy of sexuality. In fact, the phallus has been the focus of ways of constructing masculinity and power. Male domination derives in large measure from the power and the spectacle of the phallus – not so much from the threat to life during war as from the individual male’s ability to demonstrate his virility at the expense of a woman and to obtain its validation from the subjugated woman herself.<sup>531</sup>

Hence, without deepening Mbembe’s reading of the “postcolony” and colonial relationships, we can say from the get go that this constant presence of “phallic contest” and pornotroping points to the importance of the colonial wound and Mondernity’s legacy in the construction of Israeli national identity, its continuing articulation in the Middle East and vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Perhaps, it begs the more philosophical question of what is it in contemporary Western political thought and (inter)state politics that brings such importance to the phallus and male sexuality?

Moreover, it is useful to situate these t-shirts beyond their context of production and look into the value they acquire (consumption/circulation) once produced. For instance, when one considers this chapter’s introduction anecdote (IDF combat soldiers’ sperm in “hot” demand) it becomes apparent that by identifying the soldier who wears the t-shirt with an IDF unit known to be involved in combat operations or by literally depicting the of killing/maiming of a Palestinian by an IDF soldier, the t-shirt acquire a certain bio/necropolitical social and symbolic capital and an erotic/libidinal power of attraction. In other words, these t-shirts are tools of self-stylization.<sup>532</sup> In a country where all Israeli-Jews (with few exceptions) must do their military service, these t-shirts becomes a tool for social differentiation, a tool for stylizing the self. These t-shirts thus also become imbedded in the incitement libidinal biopolitical economy (discussed in Chapter 2), when it comes to make more “Jewish babies”, such as in the case of Birthright for instance. Indeed, these IDF units shirts (sometimes they are “hoodies) belonging to the *mifgash* have become over the years one of the most cherished and prized souvenir North American Jewish women ‘Birthrighters’ hope to bring home.

To conclude this section, I would suggest that these t-shirt designs points to what Achille Mbembe has called the “erotics of alterity” whereby the Jewish “biblical phantasm of the One” coincides with the narcissistic ethnocentric formulation of kinship and sovereignty coalescing in

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<sup>531</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 13.

<sup>532</sup> Nuttall, “Stylizing the Self,” 432, 437–438.

a phantasm of power and phallic superiority.<sup>533</sup> What the pictures above suggest is that this phantasm “consist in rubbing the two imaginaries of death and sexuality together, rubbing them constantly until they burst into fire.”<sup>534</sup> Here, settler colonial domination takes its shape as the formerly colonized Euro-Jew and the Euro-Christian colonizer share the same phantasms and the same teleological time of the European Nation-State, while being expressed in the form of a certain “madness” – as the t-shirt designs reveal.<sup>535</sup>

In sum, I concur with Jasbir Puar when she writes that ‘terrorist masculinities’, as in these t-shirt designs, are depicted as “failed and perverse [...] they are] emasculated bodies [that] always have femininity as their reference point of malfunction, and are metonymically tied to all sorts of pathologies of the mind and body – homosexuality, incest, pedophilia, madness, and disease” against which the body politic must be immunized.<sup>536</sup> Here the Palestinian “Muslim masculinity is simultaneously pathologically excessive yet repressive, perverse yet homophobic, virile yet emasculated [and infantilized,] monstrous yet flaccid. This discourse serves to rearticulate the devitalization of one population sequestered for dying [...] into the securitization and revitalization of one population”<sup>537</sup>: the ‘white,’ Israeli-Jews. These t-shirts designs testify to what Puar as called “a reintensification of racialization through queerness.” That is, the ‘Arab’ Other, “queerly racialized” as a ‘terrorist population’ becomes the target of a biopolitical and colonial governmentality that seeks to mitigate a “demographic threat” and its ‘primordial Eastern taint’ to the biopolitically defined population that “must live”. Long before Puar’s seminal work on homonationalism Kathy Ferguson had noted that in the context of Israel/Palestine, both

“Arabs” and “women” are folded neatly into the metaphoric apparatus privileging Jewish, military, masculinity. [...] Not so dissimilarly [to Israeli Jewish women], the representational practices creating “Arabs” also work the feminine side of the street. “The

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<sup>533</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 218–19.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxiii.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid., xxv.

Arabs” are weak, stupid, not a worthy enemy but a sneaky and therefore dangerous one. The Arabs play the women to Israel’s man, a deadly affair.<sup>538</sup>

## **Conclusion: Eroticism and Life Beyond Sovereignty**

*Woe to those who, to the very end, insist on regulating the movement that exceeds them with the narrow mind of the mechanic who changes a tire.*<sup>539</sup>

*Between an indolent thinking and a violent course of things, discord is sovereign; and our wars are the measure of those impotent and reasonable professors that lead us.*<sup>540</sup>

*You higher men, your worst part is that all of you have not learned to dance as one must dance – dance over and past yourselves!*<sup>541</sup>

By analyzing the erotics of cultural artefacts produced in times of war (selfies, pictures, banners, etc.) this chapter theorizes a type of friction happening in times of war: the friction between the sexual/erotic imaginary and the death imaginary of the sovereign. Contra Agamben’s eviction of sexuality from the bio/necropolitical contemporary regimes, what I have tried to tease out in this chapter is the intimacy between violence and sexuality (pornotroping) and the sexualization of war’s “medial images in our contemporary moments” as curated by websites attentive to social media, such as *Mondoweiss*. While many have discarded these forms of cultural artifacts to the realm of the abnormal/deviant/beyond reason, my aim was in part, like Bataille’s, to politicize these images and place them where they belong, in a settler-colonial general economy of sovereign violence. That is for – although almost the entirety of the Enlightenment’s philosophical legacy has tried to conjure this fact - “we must never imagine existence except in terms of these passions”, affects, and emotions.<sup>542</sup> Indeed, as Weheliye informs us, thinking pornotropic depictions as “deviations from the normal order [...] would only affirm the putative externality of pornotroping from the center stage of culture and politic”

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<sup>538</sup> Ferguson, Kathy., “From a Kibbutz Journal: Reflections on Gender, Race, and Militarism in Israel,” 447.

<sup>539</sup> Bataille, Georges., *The Accursed Share*, 27.

<sup>540</sup> Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, Vols. 2 and 3, 105.

<sup>541</sup> Pippin, *Nietzsche*, 240.

<sup>542</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 12.

while, in fact, pornotroping “is far from abnormal given that it shadows so many aspects of modern politics, culture, and sexuality.”<sup>543</sup>

While “the whole business of eroticism, as Bataille tells us, is to destroy the self-contained character of the participators as they are in their normal lives,”<sup>544</sup> or, “an experience of sexuality which links, for its own ends, an overcoming of limits to the death of God”<sup>545</sup>, the erotic drives that pushes the unleashing of wanton violence against Gaza aims – like Sade’s or Europe’s colonial enterprises – to the opposite aim: it is a “ruinous form of eroticism” couched in moral isolation showing what happens to *excess* when the state form and capitalism try to capture it: no limits in destruction and human misery. It’s name is Algiers, it is Bagdad, it is Jim Crow, it is Apartheid, it is Shuja’iyya. At the center of the Zionist dream for a Jewish Sovereign state in Palestine is, in the words of Maurice Blanchot, “sovereignty asserted through an enormous denial.” The denial of humanity of the indigenous colonized population<sup>546</sup>: total apathy, to the point where the other’s pain becomes one’s *jouissance*.<sup>547</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Crawley, “Stayed | Freedom | Hallelujah.”

<sup>544</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 17.

<sup>545</sup> Michel Foucault. “A Preface to Transgression” in Foucault, Rabinow, and Hurley, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 72.

<sup>546</sup> “De Sade’s system is the ruinous form of eroticism. Moral isolation means that all the brakes are off; it shows what spending can really mean. The man who admits the value of other people necessarily imposes limits upon himself.” Bataille, *Erotism*, 171.

<sup>547</sup> As Bataille writes, heeding Blanchot’s reading of De Sade: “Apathy, says Maurice Blanchot, is the spirit of denial applied to the man who has elected to be sovereign. It is in some ways the cause and principle of energy. [...] But the true man knows himself to be alone and accepts the fact; he denies every element in his own nature, inherited from seventeen centuries of cowardice, that is concerned with others than himself; pity, gratitude and love, for example, are emotions that he will destroy; through their destruction he regains all the strength he would have had to bestow on these debilitating impulses, and more important he acquires from this labour of destruction the beginnings of true energy.” Ibid., 172.



**Figure 22: Israelis sitting on the "hill of shame" in Sderot watch smoke plumes rise from explosions in Gaza**

Hence, the problem, for the Israeli-Jewish body and subject may very still be one of sovereignty. The security of one's own biopolitical existence is no longer enough to affirm one's sovereign status. Has it ever been? This question does not only apply to contemporary Israel/Palestine context, but to modernity itself, and to us too. In sum, the precedent Chapter 2 stressed the importance of *incitement* as a mode of operation of biopolitics, this chapter extends the notion of this incitement to the domain of the necropolitical: is there not also "inciting power"<sup>548</sup> (*pouvoir-incitation*) to death that intimately binds pleasure, coercion, and truth together?

Bataille points out that Sade's philosophy – however "crazy" as it sounds – is on the mark; it only pushes Western sovereign rationality (and the capitalist axiomatic I would argue) to its extreme limit, in the realm of *excess and transgression*. It is what happened when the latter are captured in a cell (of capitalism, the barrack, or the bourgeois nation-state). That is the Western realm that was confined to the space of the colony: "De Sade's doctrine is nothing more nor less than the logical consequence of these moments that deny reason."<sup>549</sup> Indeed, while the modern history of Europe's Enlightenment testify to the Old Continent's wish to expulse and repress these moments of excess (until it was no longer possible and exploded in the Holocaust),

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<sup>548</sup> Foucault and Winters, "The West and the Truth of Sex," 8.

<sup>549</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 168.

European's colonial history has proven that the colony was the space where such excess was the norm.<sup>550</sup> The colony was that space where excess and transgression could be unleashed and then hidden, so as to keep the metropolis living in its fictional realm of reason. As such, the colonial war is an erotic enterprise.<sup>551</sup> Like Rey Chow's and Jasbir Puar's critique of the "White liberal alibi" and homonationalism's function – rescuing the emancipatory and democratic narrative Euro/Western states are so attached to – pornotroping allows for a return of the "enfleshed silhouette of political violence" in the form of a deviance, and, as such, it constitutes "the historical stuff of modern sexuality—its fleshy ether."<sup>552</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Zionist is the one who says "the world is against us", living in "a nation that dwells alone" dreaming itself in a world without others, like Sade, who "may have told himself that none the less the truth of sexual attraction is not fully apparent if consideration for other people paralyses its action." Indeed, Sade "refused to contemplate anything he could not experience in the interminable silence of his cell where only visions of an imaginary world bound him to life."<sup>553</sup> Only, in the case of the Zionist, he has made his body and his nation-state his prison, and he has embarked the indigenous and diasporic (non-Zionist) Jews with him in his real-life fantasy and moral isolation.

First through intra-European colonialism and capture, and then through the process of colonization of Palestine, the Zionist dream/phantasm morphed into a Sadistic reality for that was the only condition to become truly a sovereign man. Indeed, in Sade's logic the "respect of man for man leads to a cycle of servitude that allows only for minor moments of disorder and finally ends the respect that their attitude is based on since we are denying the sovereign moment

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<sup>550</sup> As Michel Foucault writes about the experience of modernity, "by denying us the limit of the Limitless, the death of God leads to an experience in which nothing may again announce the exteriority of being, and consequently to an experience that *interior* and *sovereign*. But such an experience, for which the death of God is an explosive reality, discloses as its own secret of clarification, its intrinsic finitude, the limitless reign of the Limit, and the emptiness of those excesses in which it spends itself and where it is found wanting." in "A Preface to Transgression" in Foucault, Rabinow, and Hurley, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 71.

<sup>551</sup> Bataille, *L'érotisme*.

<sup>552</sup> Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, chap. 6.

<sup>553</sup> Bataille, *Erotism*, 169–170.

to man in general.”<sup>554</sup> If the infinite destruction of his warring policies turns him on so much, it is because the infinite continuity of his own life (and people) is linked with infinite destruction and negation.<sup>555</sup> And thus, he sits on the hill where destruction can be witnessed, even felt, live in front of him. And thus she offers her half-naked body. Obviously, the Zionist is not alone here. He is not the exception. He is only the embodied living testament of Modernity and Enlightenment’s violent moral isolation, one more in the chain of settler colonialism.<sup>556</sup>

There is always, when it comes to desire, a fundamental fascination for death. As such, eroticism’s play is always about the dissolution of preexisting forms of social life at the basis of the discontinuous order that defines the individuals that we are.<sup>557</sup> But this dissolution does not have to lead to death. Only the sadist prefers death. There are indeed avenues, as Bataille suggest, for desire and energy to express itself beyond sadism, outside state capture of libidinal energies and the barracks/prison model (which, after all, was Sade’s). While sovereignty might be an ideal, which for Sade came at the expenses of others, we must learn to dwell through artful practices between the two ends of a spectrum (objectification / sovereignty) that, which take us beyond the fear of death. One finds in the rhythmic movement of poetry, music, love, dance – even surfing – “insurgent forms of joyful life”<sup>558</sup> taking, retaking, and making last the instant that counts, the instant of rupture, in sum, the sovereign moment. Poetry and arts in general have the power to take us at the same level every form of erotism does; to the indistinctness and confusion of distinct objects and bodies, to the crossing and transgression of the boundaries that

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<sup>554</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>556</sup> As Ashon Crawley writes in his book review of A. Weheliye’s “Habeas Coprus”, “The ceaseless pulse of violence is the epistemological frame by which modernity enacts itself, empowers and revises itself, unending violence is the enclosure and logic of modernity’s operation and, importantly, is how the concept of Western Man emerges. To ground otherwise possibilities for relationality in the violence, incalculable and insufferable, that happens to us is to adhere to the logic, is to adhere to the epistemological enclosure and frame, to the musicked measure and rhythmic pulse, of Western theological-philosophical thought” in Crawley, “Stayed | Freedom | Hallelujah.”

<sup>557</sup> I am paraphrasing G. Bataille for I could not find any appropriate translation in the English edition cited in this chapter. In Bataille, *L’erotisme*, 20.

<sup>558</sup> I am borrowing this from Jairus V. Grove’s talk for Project Q, *Terrorism in an Age of Quantum Insecurity* | Dr. Jairus Grove | Q Keynote Lecture 2016.

constituted them.<sup>559</sup> It thus, in a singular movement, takes us to eternity, death, and through death, to continuity. In sum, the ethno-national framework inherited from Enlightenment does not exhaust the list of possibilities and avenues for Jews/Israelis (or Palestinians for that matter) self-fashioning. Insofar as the Jewish-Zionist answer to the European Enlightenment's colonial wound is a *reactive* one, the logic of *recognition* (instead of *creation*) remains the dominant lens through which Zionism and most Israelis today shape their mode of being in the world, and the aim for Israeli-Jews, like all movement of emancipation, is to look for "otherwise modalities of existence"<sup>560</sup>.

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<sup>559</sup> Michel Foucault. "A Preface to Transgression" in Foucault, Rabinow, and Hurley, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 69–87.

<sup>560</sup> Crawley, "Stayed | Freedom | Hallelujah."



## Chapter 4: Effective Abandonment: The Neoliberal Economy of Violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories<sup>561</sup>

*Sometimes it is confused with the magic violence of the State, at other times with the State's military institution. [...] Rather than operating by blow-by-blow violence, or constituting a violence "once and for all," the war machine, with breeding and training, institutes an entire economy of violence, in other words, a way of making violence durable, even unlimited.*<sup>562</sup>

### Introduction

While getting lesser attention than the so-called "Arab Spring", the Tel Aviv's social justice protest "July 14" movement (J14) drew attention intermittently in the context of the region's uproar. The J14 was a middle class driven socio-political movement demanding economic reforms affecting rent prices in Israel, especially in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where, like in most other capitals and large cities around the world, the cost of living has soared radically. Like the other civil societies of the region, which seemed to be increasingly polarized between regimes and revolutionary movements, the J14 movement has been read as the effect of the polarization of the Israeli society between "statists" and "radicals" and the incapacity or unwillingness of the successive government administrations to confront the latter for fear of civil war coupled with political electoral opportunism.<sup>563</sup>

However, what is more troubling is that violent events in the Israeli controlled parts of the Palestinian Occupied Territories (POT) have gone almost unnoticed. As the settler violent "price tag actions" (PTA) increased both in frequency and gravity,<sup>564</sup> Palestinians were no longer the

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<sup>561</sup> An earlier version of this chapter has been published under the same title, in *Security Dialogue*, October-December 2013, vol. 44, no. 5-6, pp. 449-466.

<sup>562</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 354, 396.

<sup>563</sup> Daniel Levine and Daniel Bertrand-Monk, "'Dangerous Neighborhood:' Operation 'Defensive Pillar' and Its Interpreters."

<sup>564</sup> The failure of the settler establishment to stop the 2005 "disengagement" from Gaza marks a new mode of neoliberal governmentality (see Azoulay & Ophir 2009, 100-101, 104, 135). According to Eyal Weizman (2011, 85) "the term 'disengagement' [...] should rather be used to refer to a new type of regime of controlled abandonment". Hence, price tag actions should not be conflated with simple settler violence; they are the result of this neoliberal governmentality. As a recent UNESCO Chair report points out, "'Price tag' attacks have tripled in 2011, going from 7-

sole targets. Indeed, settlers also began attacking IDF bases in the POT that serve as key nodes in the dismantling of illegal colonies.<sup>565</sup> In one occasion, settlers of Beit El were described screaming “war, this is war” as they “urged one another to push back the [Israeli] Border Police”.<sup>566</sup> Last year, a group of a dozen “hilltop youth” settlers led by the grandson of the extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane and calling itself “the Revolt” pushed the PTA logic further than any other group, making murder of Palestinians part of their toolbox and literally working to topple the Israeli state via mass unrest.<sup>567</sup>

Between the end of 2011 and September 2012 especially, settler attacks of all sorts have risen dramatically.<sup>568</sup> Amongst others, we can count amongst those the burning of mosques,<sup>569</sup> the destruction and theft of olive groves and other forms of economic resources,<sup>570</sup> and the use firearms with live ammunition on Palestinians resisting the destruction of the latter.<sup>571</sup> All of those fulfill the function of accelerating and forcing upon the Palestinian population a new form of technology inducing life-towards-death when the neoliberal active abandonment and arbitrary restrictions have yet to notch Palestinian resilience. Meanwhile, the Israeli state apparatus did and still does very little to reverse the tide of violence. The “radio silence” on these events points to a racial and biopolitical limit embedded in the J14 movement. This limit is also present in analyses of the movement that avoid highlighting the link between the Palestinians’ plight and the so-called Israel’s “civil war”.

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8 attacks for each year from 2008-2010 to 24 attacks in 2011. So far, as of the month of July, there have been 10 ‘price tag’ attacks in 2012” (UNESCO Chair 2012, 32).

<sup>565</sup> Altman, “Settlers Raid IDF Base, Injure Commander - Israel News, Ynetnews.”

<sup>566</sup> Joel Braunold, “Gaza Disengagement: When Israel Lost a Slice of Its Sovereignty Over Settlers.”

<sup>567</sup> Already in December 2011, the leader of “the Revolt” and four others “right-wing activists were arrested on suspicion of gathering information about [the Israeli] army movements.” Chaim Levinson, “Meet the Jewish Extremist Group That Seeks to Violently Topple the State.”

<sup>568</sup> UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy at An-Najah National University, “Outposts and ‘Price Tag’ Violence: A Blown Upon A Bruise.”

<sup>569</sup> Kershner, Isabel., “Mosque Burning Frays Ties Between Israel and Arab Allies - The New York Times”; Levinson, Chaim., “Mosque Vandalized as Settlers Attack Palestinian Village.”

<sup>570</sup> “In 2013 the World Bank conservatively estimated that the Palestinians lose at least \$3.4bn a year in resources plundered by Israel.” in Cook, Jonathan., “Aid Subversion Report Makes for Shocking Reading | The National.”

<sup>571</sup> BBC News, “Settlers Filmed Shooting at Palestinian Protesters.”

Indeed, Israeli-Palestinians were barred from speaking at some of the J14's public gatherings by the organizers. One of these Israeli citizens was a woman from the *Ma'an* workers movement who was supposed to talk about labor issues.<sup>572</sup> Almost at the same time, the same organizers handed the microphone to a rightwing member of the Knesset who proposed to jail human rights activists opposing the deportation of African migrants and their internment into work camps.<sup>573</sup> Similarly, as a small group of the so-called "Hilltop Youth" showed to the J14's "tent city" on Rothschild's Boulevard, the J14 organizers' response was to invite them to stay.<sup>574</sup> Those events revealed the racial limits of Israeli politics and the biopolitical partition of society, and therefore the different forms of belonging and citizenship.<sup>575</sup>

The racial (bio/necropolitical) limits of the J14 movements also demonstrate that there is a significant stake in keeping the disqualified "Arab" (Israeli-Palestinians citizens and Palestinians) populations as a federating threat.<sup>576</sup> Indeed, as Daniel Levine and Daniel Bertrand Monk have argued in 2012, the J14 movement was doomed to fail because the Israeli administration refrains from confronting head-on what they call the "radicals" (what I prefer to call the "settler war machine").<sup>577</sup> Every time the Israeli government and policy makers have tried to enact policies that went against these "radicals", violence, sometimes taking the face of civil war proportions, ensued. Indeed, according to Levine and Bertrand Monk, "challenging the radicals head-on means civil war for the statist."<sup>578</sup> Yet, what is missing from Levine and Bertrand Monk's texts is the close relationship between neoliberal trends throttling rent prices through the roof and biopolitical/racial logic that is the condition of possibility for perpetuating the occupation and the Israeli apartheid.

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<sup>572</sup> "Israel's J14 Movement and the Occupation."

<sup>573</sup> Deger, Allison., "Knesset Member and J14 Advocate"; Burston, "Who Would This Israeli Lawmaker Round Up and Send to 'The Camps?'"

<sup>574</sup> Bertrand Monk, Daniel and Daniel Levine., "The End of the 'Israeli Spring.'"

<sup>575</sup> As the Israeli historian and Professor at Tel Aviv University, Ze'ev Sternhell pointed out, social justice "is not merely the right to decent housing for Jews, it is also the right to freedom of a nation under occupation." in Sternhell, "Social Justice Also Means Ending the Occupation."

<sup>576</sup> Bertrand Monk, Daniel and Daniel Levine., "The End of the 'Israeli Spring.'"

<sup>577</sup> Daniel Levine and Daniel Bertrand-Monk, "'Dangerous Neighborhood:' Operation 'Defensive Pillar' and Its Interpreters."

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

In short, by equating the “radicals” with ultra-religious and/or ultra-nationalist Zealots exclusively (who form a very small percentage of settlers now living in the Occupied Territories) they miss the fact that occupation has played a major role in lowering rent prices and offering cheap housing to Israelis from various backgrounds and milieus. In other words, the real estate investors and construction corporations building the settlements are probably in equally good terms with the settlers than with the government officials who happen to encourage settlement in the Occupied Territories. If there is a low intensity civil war<sup>579</sup>, some settlers, Israeli citizens, investors, and government officials are certainly benefiting from it, even though they let others walk to the frontline.

Amongst other economic effects, settler PTA and colonization renders land in the POT and Israel’s ‘Arab villages and neighbourhoods’ available for settlement construction thus providing cheap rent that corresponds with the state’s policing imperatives and the demands of the middle-class J14 movement. Moreover, the tactics developed against Palestinians in the POT benefit to Israeli politicians who hope to restore a “demographic balance” in certain Israeli towns and cities with significant Israeli-Palestinian population. That is, with the entry of the settler violence into ‘Israel proper’ we also witness the intensification of practices geared towards the policing of the body politic and a reproduction of racial limits and modes of partitioning exemplified by the activities of the J14 movement.

As I illustrate in the explorations below, these events provoke us to rethink the theoretical assumptions that have guided the problematization and analyses of practices of securitization in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Not only do they depart from conventional understanding of state sovereignty as the monopoly of legitimate violence popularized by Max Weber, they also partition of the national space along a spectrum – running from hyper-securitized to necropolitical spaces – such that violence, death and an active governing by abandonment takes on a productive role in the administration of a biopolitically disqualified population. In the context of Israeli governmentality vis-à-vis the neoliberal market, settlers in the POT form ‘war

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<sup>579</sup> A recent Pew report on the Israeli Society has been interpreted as one more statistical proof of that “civil war”. See Heilman, “Pew Report.”

machines’<sup>580</sup> that thrive on insecurity, danger, and risk. They also channel State and transnational resources towards their own ends through processes of securitization of a racially and religiously defined life that “must live” as violence becomes an exchangeable commodity for the realization of its own ends.<sup>581</sup>

Framed as PTA, settler violence produces new subjects/objects of violence and security, which also, I would argue, creates the conditions of possibility for a neoliberal economy, which in turn produces further violence, abandonment and “deferred death”.<sup>582</sup> The necropolitical character of such a neoliberal economy means that states “can no longer claim a monopoly on violence and on the means of coercion within their territory. Nor can they claim a monopoly on territorial boundaries.”<sup>583</sup> As Achille Mbembe illustrates, the POT represent one of those ‘necropolitical spaces’ where life itself is organized around making men and women available for performing dangerous tasks and work; where “daily life is militarized” and violence is no longer an *affaire d’État*, but a *commodity* of everyday life.<sup>584</sup> In line with this economy of violence, the aim of state and non-state security apparatus in Israel and the POT is not to eliminate violence and threats, but to maintain a certain level of violence and danger so as to “establish an equilibrium” or “homeostasis” that is economically and politically rewarding.<sup>585</sup> In sum, judicial and extra-judicial violence is not pursued to end insecurity and danger. Rather, the aim is to establish a well-managed economy of violence, where the latter becomes a source of

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<sup>580</sup> According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and Mbembe (2003, 32) war machines are made up of segments of armed men that split up or merge with one another depending on the tasks to be carried out and the circumstances. These polymorphous and diffuse organizations are characterized by their capacity for metamorphosis. Sometimes, they enjoy complex links with state forms (from autonomy to incorporation) and the state may transform itself into a war machine or appropriate for itself an existing war machine or help to create one.

<sup>581</sup> Hoffman, *The War Machines*.

<sup>582</sup> I have made this argument in the previous version of this chapter, published as Plasse-Couture, “Effective Abandonment”; and Andy Clarno made a very similar argument two years later in “Neoliberal Apartheid” in Jacobs and Soske, *Apartheid Israel*.

<sup>583</sup> Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 32.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>585</sup> Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 243.

profit, capital accumulation, and the elimination of people and conditions that do not optimize settler life.<sup>586</sup>

Attentive to the new forms of neoliberal violence and their relationship to a long history of settler violence in Israel and the OT, this chapter engages ongoing discussions on various aspects of the Israeli Occupation that began after Israeli ‘disengagement’ from Gaza and the resultant change in Israeli governmentality and administration of the POT. As illustrated by Israeli scholars, this post-‘disengagement’ phase of the occupation is marked by the fact that the governmentality increasingly relies on a unique and cost-efficient “logic of withheld or suspended violence” that enables Israel to assert its domination over the Palestinian territories and their populations.<sup>587</sup> Uncertainty and “deferred death” are the direct result of such logic and have become the new features of everyday Palestinian life.<sup>588</sup> In a similar vein, Eyal Weizman pointed out how this new logic of governmentality has been made possible through new spatial, architectural and military technologies.<sup>589</sup> For instance, new technologies of control such as magnetic cards, flying checkpoints, drones, differentiated spatial zones, CCTV, remote controlled jeeps and guns, and elevated highways all fulfill the functions of reducing ‘friction’ between the various Israeli administrative and security apparatuses, the settlers and the Palestinian indigenous population as well as detaching and differentiating the administered population from the administered space and its resources. This “inclusive exclusion” of the Palestinian by the Israeli government involves planning a meticulous administration of Palestinians’ movement through the fragmentation of the POT space. The latter contributes to the rise uncertainty for Palestinians.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Cf. Foucault, “Alternatives to the Prison Dissemination or Decline of Social Control?,” 18–19.; “Michel Foucault, l’illégalisme et l’art de punir”, interview with G. Tarab published in *La Presse*, n. 80, April 3rd 1976, pp. 2 and 23. Reproduced in Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits, Tome 2*, 86–89.

<sup>587</sup> Ariella Azoulay & Adi Ophir. “The Order of Violence” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 99–140.; Gordon, “From Colonization to Separation”; Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*; Gordon and Filc, “ Hamas and the Destruction of Risk Society.”

<sup>588</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*; See also Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*.

<sup>589</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007.

<sup>590</sup> Hilla Dayan. “Regimes of Separation: Israel/Palestine and the Shadow of Apartheid” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 281–322.; Ariel Handel. “Where, Where to, and When in the Occupied Territories: An Introduction to Geography of Disaster” in *ibid.*,

Others, who have worked on the political economy of the occupation have noted how it implies the promotion of the Palestinian economic dependence on the Israeli economy as well as processes of systematized dispossession, and “de-development” that affects the social fabric of the Palestinian society, and thus, its political entities like Hamas and Fatah.<sup>591</sup> Locating these processes within the context of neoliberal globalization Gadi Algazi has pointed out how they were closely linked to a settler colonial *dispositif* comprising global real estate investors, Israeli construction companies, corrupt officials exploiting Israeli socio-economic disparities, government agencies and subsidies secured through processes of securitization, and religious practices to further colonization, steal land and generate quick profits.<sup>592</sup> Among the numerous outcomes of “de-development” and abandonment is the establishment of mechanisms of violence and governance whereby “catastrophization” and humanitarianism are the two faces of the same coin, constituting a new governmental logic by which the economy of violence in the OT is calculated and managed.<sup>593</sup>

Heeding the insights from these critical readings of the ‘state’ of violence in Israel and the OT and provoked by Achille Mbembe and Michel Foucault’s theoretical explorations on the dynamics of political life, this chapter engages and seeks to sketch the micropolitics of bio- and necropower in Israel and the POT and its corresponding neoliberal political economy of violence. Among other things, one can identify what I call the “settler war machine” characterized by an evolving relationship between the state and settler society through an investigation of the relationship between neoliberalism and violence in Israel and the Occupied

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179–222.; Ariel Handel. “Exclusionary surveillance and spatial uncertainty in the occupied Palestinian territories” in Zureik, Lyon, and Abu-Laban, *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine*, 259–275.

<sup>591</sup> Caroline Abu-Saba. “Cultivating Dependence: Palestinian Agriculture under the Israeli Occupation” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 413–433.; Leila Farsakh. “From Domination to Destruction: The Palestinian Economy under the Israeli Occupation” in *ibid.*, 379–403.; Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*; Roy, “De-Development Revisited”; Roy, “Palestinian Society and Economy”; Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*.

<sup>592</sup> Gadi Algazi. “Matrix in Bil’in: Colonial Capitalism in the Occupied Territories” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 519–533.; See also Algazi, “Offshore Zionism”; and Guarnieri, Mya., “Israeli Settlers Lured by Subsidies - Al Jazeera English.”

<sup>593</sup> Adi Ophir. “The politics of catastrophization : emergency and exception” in Fassin and Pandolfi, *Contemporary States of Emergency*, 59–88.; Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*.

Territories. With a specific focus on the violence that takes place in the recent years in Israel/Palestine, I argue that the PTA perpetrated by settlers in the Occupied Territories and Israel are the effect of a neoliberal organization of power characterized by a form of governing by non-intervention whereby the abandonment of certain parts of society produces the desired containment of undesirable elements to the body politic in a increasingly economical and sustainable manner. The latter contributes to legitimacy of the regime in Israel and abroad. That is, this mode of governmentality reflects a desire to increasingly check resistance without having recourse to the state ‘monopoly on the legitimate use of violence’, or what Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir term “eruptive violence” in contrast with “withheld violence”.<sup>594</sup> The latter “promises maximal control [...] at the *lowest price*.”<sup>595</sup>

Therefore, I want to ask how the politics of securitization, the politics regulating the practices of security and war, and the security *dispositif* Israel-Palestine work. Are they designed to suppress violent threats, dangers, and risks – as it is too often normatively assumed by IR scholarship – or are they in fact designed to organize and order them in order to obtain politically and economically rewarding effects? If so, how are we to think about the presumed opposition between non-state violence and order especially in places where they seem to increasingly depend on each other?

### **Biopolitics, Race and Sovereignty in Israel/Palestine**

In the context of Israel-Palestine, a process of racialization further complicates the emerging dependence of the state and economy on non-state violence. Racialization takes the form of a governmentality based on the distribution of bodies in the POT and ‘Israel proper’ by using the shadow of “Arabness”<sup>596</sup> and its opposite, the Sabra (see Chapter 1). Race here should be understood as a presumption or a normative strategy whereby some forms of life, framed as populations, are said to be superior to, and/or prioritized over others. This process also involves a

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<sup>594</sup> Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir. “The Order of Violence” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 111.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid., 119. My emphasis.

<sup>596</sup> Ian Lustick points out that Israel’s political and national identity is mostly, and before all, defined by the “ ‘non-Arab’ character of the state”. Lustick, “Israel as a Non-Arab State,” 433.



distribution of differences through the politics of war and securitization permeating various practices, ranging from the policing of intimacies (see Chapter 2) to the control of water flow and access to roads and land for instance.

As argued in Chapter 2 of this thesis, racializing strategies involve practices in the service of a biopolitical racial endeavor, the multiple dimensions of violence and the dynamics of exchange that enable them (in this case libidinal economies) become apparent.<sup>597</sup> That is, the politics of race and its arbitrariness are exposed when affective relationships transcend those social markers. As Jasbir Puar – but also the previous Chapter 3 – has argued, the policing of intimacies becomes “embedded in control societies” like neoliberal/settler Israel and serves “as a mode of population disaggregation between those incited to life and those consigned to death”.<sup>598</sup> The exceptional body subject of biopolitics – the “Chosen Body” in Israel – is thus produced, policed and “defended” against the “putrid” life-toward-death of the necropolitical space.

These racialized populations become a datum, a field of intervention, and the ultimate objective of governmental strategies, which have “security” as rational of governance and “essential mechanism”.<sup>599</sup> The Weberian notion of sovereignty is thus incomplete, for the target is no longer territory, but primarily population defined by the racially based “inclusive exclusion”. Under such logic, the population appears to be the “end and instrument of government rather than sovereign’s strength” and the security of “society” becomes the alibi for active state intervention and modulation.<sup>600</sup> In other words, “governmentality” “recruits” a racially defined civil society.<sup>601</sup>

The neoliberal economy – as a “science” of the “social environment” – is the rational and strategy through which the population and space are constituted as two different important

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<sup>597</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 146.

<sup>598</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxvi.

<sup>599</sup> Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population*, 109.; See also Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

<sup>600</sup> Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population*, 105–106.

<sup>601</sup> Lazzarato, “Neoliberalism in Action Inequality, Insecurity and the Reconstitution of the Social,” 116.

political problems. Neoliberalism becomes the condition of intelligibility of bio/necropolitics through the governance (abandonment as a form of governance) of a racially defined population.

### **Biopolitics, Neoliberalism and Security**

Biopolitics are intimately related to neoliberalism.<sup>602</sup> Neoliberalism dissociates market economics from a *laissez-faire* rationale of government. As such, neoliberalism thus becomes the new rationality, or governmentality, as it constitutes the site of veridiction or the norm.<sup>603</sup> That is, it requires a form of governmentality that intervenes actively, not on the market, but on the “social environment” (society), so as to foster competition amongst subjects.<sup>604</sup> Inequality (difference) becomes a necessary condition for neoliberalism, growth and price stabilization to take place and governance acts vehemently on the social environment so as to make this competition possible with the reward and punishment of subjects, and relations that make up the entrepreneurial societal fabric, nullifying anti-competitive mechanisms by introducing difference through the securitization of “life that must live”, and active abandonment of the racially disqualified.<sup>605</sup> In sum, neoliberal governmentality implies an active modulation policy of “vigilance, activity, and intervention” which aims at striking an “acceptable equilibrium” between various normalities with a “vital minimum” of intervention preventing violence and unrest to eschew in civil war or into unproductive violence.<sup>606</sup> Too much violence, and civil war eschews. Not enough violence, and Israel loses its comparative advantage. These are now the two thresholds defining Israeli administrators’ policies.

The recent indictment of three settlers accused of PTA points to this economical rationality, stating that “the perpetrators of the price tag actions hoped to cause agitation and disquiet in the Judea and Samaria areas [(the West Bank)], [...], and lead to agitation [...] which would compel the police and security forces to *divert larger resources* to restore law and order in these

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<sup>602</sup> Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 22 fn.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>605</sup> See *ibid.*, 145, 160.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid., 131.; Lazzarato, “Neoliberalism in Action Inequality, Insecurity and the Reconstitution of the Social,” 128–132.

areas.”<sup>607</sup> It is thus about keeping a level of investment in the governance of the social environment just enough so as to bring crime, danger, and risk at an acceptable level, without aiming at what would be an economically and politically costly “total” disciplinarization of individuals. As such, the blockade of the Gaza Strip and the separation of the West Bank mark “Israel’s abandonment of any attempt to discipline Palestinians as individuals. [...] and] Israel’s indifference towards the individual inhabitants is intricately tied to and informed by the way Israel modified its use of the Palestinian economy as a form of control.”<sup>608</sup>

This dynamic equilibrium is referred to by Israeli officials as “breathing space” or as an “elastic zone of discretion”.<sup>609</sup> Yotam Feldman and Uri Blau have revealed the existence of a document entitled “Red Lines”, which lists *thresholds* not to cross for the Israeli apparatuses in charge of managing the active abandonment of the Palestinians.<sup>610</sup> For instance, the minimum amount of calories required to sustain a population of 1.5 million Gazans is set just above the UN definition of hunger and the ‘breathing space’ is constantly reassessed through the constant monitoring of Gaza’s situation. Data on the social is put into sets of equations:  $C = A \cdot B$ ,  $D = Z/C$ , and  $Z = X + Y - C$ .<sup>611</sup> Equally stunning is the ex-Israeli General Itzhak Ben Israel equation developed to predict the *necessary minimum* of ‘terrorists’ the Israeli military would have to assassinate in order to defeat an organisation such as Hamas. The equation is  $Q = 1 - (q \ln q + 1/q \ln 1/q)$  (Q being the probability of collapsing the organisation and q being the percentage of militants killed).<sup>612</sup>

This modulation takes the form of policies increasingly implemented in the name of security. Intervention takes the form of military and economic support for the building of settlement in various “zones” in the OT where Israeli-Jewish bodies face greater risks and

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<sup>607</sup> Levinson, “Settler Youth Indicted for West Bank ‘Price Tag’ Attack” My emphasis.

<sup>608</sup> Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 188.

<sup>609</sup> Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, 84, 92.

<sup>610</sup> See English translation of *RedLines* at <http://www.haaretz.com/resources/Pdf/red-lines.pdf>

<sup>611</sup> A being the daily consumption per capita per product, B the population of Gaza, C the daily consumption, Z the quantity of food reserve in Gaza, D the breathing space in days, X the daily quantity of produce entering Gaza, and Y the existing reserve in Gaza. Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, 85.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

danger.<sup>613</sup> Risk becomes an asset for the state apparatus in that it facilitates the legitimization of its channeling of resources to settlers and industries operating from within the West Bank. Here again, race becomes an important factor. That is, those who's economic situation forces them to take this kind of risk are obviously not in majority from the Ashkenazi elite but from the Mizrahim or ex-USSR republics (including Russia) ethnic groups. This racially defined form of Jewish life thus appears as a buffer and first line of defense for the Askenazim elite. The current situation thus recalls the "development towns" built for the Mizrahim migrants in the 50s and 60s.<sup>614</sup>

We can thus see that there are processes of securitization aiming at "smoothing" the problem of circulation related to the intertwining of biopolitical (making live a racially bounded "civil society") and economical processes, and the subsequent creation of various unequal spaces of citizenship and security in the POT.<sup>615</sup> Amongst the economic effects of building settlements and industries in such zones we can consider the stabilization of the rent prices (danger allows money to be channeled through depoliticized securitization processes) and the providing of a pool of Palestinian cheap labor, for which the state does not even need to govern (social services or active protection).<sup>616</sup> In this sense, the Oslo partition of the West Bank into three Zones (A, B, and C) and the creation of the Palestinian Authority was a key geopolitical development in the formation of this Israeli neoliberal regime.

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<sup>613</sup> In a 2007 report, B'Tselem listed nine types of movement permits only for the circulation within the West Bank. For full list see Michal Givoni. "The Occupation's Paper Trail" in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 323.

<sup>614</sup> Guarnieri, Mya., "Israeli Settlers Lured by Subsidies - Al Jazeera English."

<sup>615</sup> On the problem of security and circulation see Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population*, 194.; On the type of territoriality produced the state G. Sibertin-Blanc writes "a heteronomy of state territoriality. [...] the type of territoriality that the state produces while at the same time finding in it the condition and the field of exercise of its power is never only the product of its capturing power, but always indebted to the complex and conflictual articulation with other forces producing heterogenous spaces." Guillaume. Sibertin-Blanc, *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari*, 73. My own translation.

<sup>616</sup> There were still 53,800 Palestinians from the WB working in Israel in 2011. "Labour Force Quarterly Survey : July-September 2008" see Table 30.

Security funds and the threat environment function to outsource violence to settlers while still maintaining state interest.<sup>617</sup> Private security contractors (PVCs) take an increasing role in the policing and security functions in the POT. When it is the IDF that is in charge of settlement security, it often acts or performs the tasks of PVCs, responding to the demands and orders of a civilian “settlement security coordinator”.<sup>618</sup> The result is an overall lower cost of security as the large number of armed forces initially necessary to police the POT can be withdrawn. Where relatively large amount of forces can’t be withdrawn, it is the settlers that are withdrawn. Such was the case in Gaza in 2005. Politically, this is rewarding for responsibility appears to be transferred. The state is exonerated from the obligation and potential international and internal political fall out of military action while maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of violence and presence necessary to maintain the occupied territory as a kind of buffer to the normalized state space of Israel.<sup>619</sup>

Moreover, the internationally recognized Israeli state border (Green Line) is to a very large extent no longer militarized. The frontier has moved to the separation wall’s path and to settlers outposts. Indeed, during my visit in the West Bank, accompanied with volunteers from the *Combatants for Peace* NGO, we were stopped at the Jaljulyeh/HaPerot (#109) checkpoint, in the Occupied Territories (south east of Qalqilyah), and on the Separation Wall path. Private security companies man the latter around the clock. The army is nowhere to be seen. Thus, settlements beyond the Green Line appear to the eyes of the Israeli public as within Israeli proper.<sup>620</sup> The privatization and outsourcing of this kind of checkpoint has the effect of reducing – at least on paper, in the Ministry of Defense balance sheet – the cost of the occupation while also contributing to Israel’s authorities effort “to erase from public consciousness the Green Line.”<sup>621</sup> It also provides an incentive to these private security firms to develop new surveillance

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<sup>617</sup> Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 194.

<sup>618</sup> See the numerous testimonies of IDF soldiers who experienced this reality. Breaking the Silence, *Our Harsh Logic*, pt. IV.

<sup>619</sup> In the past month, many Palestinians have been killed by these private security contractors at various checkpoints within the Palestinian Occupied Territories. See for instance Hasson, “Israel” or; Strickland, Patrick, “Israeli Guard Shoots Dead 13-Year-Old Palestinian Girl.”

<sup>620</sup> On the concealment of the occupation to the Israeli society as a key organizing principle of the current situation, see Hochberg, *Visual Occupations*, pt. I.

<sup>621</sup> Kershner, “Israel-West Bank Green Line, Defining Lives, Decades On.”

high-tech devices that will lower their cost of operation and be the next innovative gadget in the ever-growing surveillance/homeland security global industry.

## **Abandonment and Neoliberalism**

Of course, the description suggests more coordination than there is or than is necessary. There need not be an agreement or even explicit coordination of settler, corporate, and state interests. Instead the process of racialization, the fever pitch of insecurity, and the neoliberal logic of capitalism organize this complementarity through *resonance*.<sup>622</sup> The State and sovereignty should thus be conceptualized as an *effect* of a specific arrangement of forces. Different agencies and governmental practices are now producing *sovereign effects* without a top down centralized decision-making process.

As Foucault points out, in the context of neoliberalism, the state increasingly avoids using its “right of rejoinder”.<sup>623</sup> Of course, the Israeli state still has recourse to the “making die” techniques of security (military operations such as *Cast Lead*). Yet, what we need to highlight is the increasing “letting die” of abandoned population. Abandonment here takes the form of a possessive and affective investment in the production of death (“let die”), and it must be understood as an *active* form of governmental action. The administration of racially excluded population no longer has the multiplication of life as its main target of governmentality, but the management of economical and political costs. Israeli officials refer to these ‘costs’ as “diplomatic fallout”.

Here “soft death”<sup>624</sup> takes the form of a nonevent. Ethical and political implications are dispersed and dissipated into a complex diagram of power which involves taxation, sequestration of tax revenues, air, naval and terrestrial blockade, a network of checkpoints, permits, magnetic cards, the calculation of the ‘vital minimum’ of food, settler exclusive roads partitioning the

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<sup>622</sup> On resonance, capitalism, and sovereign effect, see Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*.

<sup>623</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 135.

<sup>624</sup> Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 167; Andy Clarno. “Neoliberal Apartheid” in Jacobs and Soske, *Apartheid Israel*.

inhabited space into administrative areas and a proliferation of various subject position and legalities/illegalities.<sup>625</sup> We can thus speak about an *effective abandonment* for it represents a new form of “making die” which is attached to a neoliberal governmentality and economy.<sup>626</sup>

Letting the Palestinians in the OT and the Israeli-Palestinians citizens of Israel swim against the neoliberal currents of increasing expensive basic life necessities becomes a more economical and sustainable governmental technique. Destitute through racial politics and identified as ‘demographic problem’, a ‘cancer’,<sup>627</sup> Palestinian and Israeli-Palestinians “find themselves in a structural space no longer valued by the market and its cultural forces” and for them, “the softer forms of letting die will do. They will be allowed to continue to persist in the seams of neoliberalism and late liberalism until they exhaust themselves.”<sup>628</sup> For instance, a simple decision to turn off water, to stop oil and food at borders, to impose a curfew, or turn a blind eye on settler violence may suffice.<sup>629</sup>

The social environment is therefore not divorced from the space of sovereignty even if it operates often beyond the official policies and practices of the state. Indeed, neoliberalism dwells on various strategies of governing for re-ordering political spaces and populations.<sup>630</sup> There is thus a process of spatial fragmentation and separation of the polity creating different expectations of securitization within and across various spaces. This spatialization affects the various bodies inhabiting them as the protocols of securitization varies, thus producing different registers of “dividuals”, rather than earlier disciplinary specificity of one particularly good/criminal subject. The biopolitical order comes to reflect the (in)capacity of bodies to

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<sup>625</sup> Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 30; Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007, 30; Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir. “The Order of Violence” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 135.

<sup>626</sup> Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 98.

<sup>627</sup> Shavit, Ari, “The Enemy Within.”

<sup>628</sup> Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 95.

<sup>629</sup> On the unwillingness of Israeli authorities to investigate and prosecute Jewish perpetrators of violence against Palestinians, see “The Occupation’s Fig Leaf.”

<sup>630</sup> Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*.

circulate across those different spaces,<sup>631</sup> and the security apparatuses mediate and distribute bodies along the axes of space, place, and race.<sup>632</sup>

For instance, in Israel and the POT there are different spaces created by different levels of securitization and presence of forms of (dis)qualified life inhabiting the designated spaces. Tel Aviv and other major urban centers where most of the secular, Ashkenazim elite dwells represent one end of a spectrum, with the in between ultra-orthodox neighborhoods (sometimes compared to “Arab villages”, where the police is afraid to enter)<sup>633</sup> and settlements as well as the “Arab towns” of Israel proper where police forces enter only rarely and where there is an increase in the resonance of the settler war-machine actions.<sup>634</sup> At the end of the spectrum, the so-called “Palestinian Authority controlled areas”, where the settler war machine has taken the space created by the active abandonment of the Israeli state dispositif and where life takes the form of a being towards death (Zones A and B). The population inhabiting these necropolitical spaces is left to struggle against the daily restriction of circulation that are distributed according to the cheap labor demand and needs of the occupier, settler security matters, or for the simple desire to assert authority.<sup>635</sup>

In such context, necropolitical spaces of abandonment cohabit alongside and even overlap spaces designed for protecting and making life live, and other in-between spaces that participate in a political economy of violence, risk and insecurity. All are involved in the stabilization of prices and extracting resources at a minimum cost. Each space produces a type of citizen or subject depending on her/his endurance, tolerance and resources (private security firms, private and public subsidies, tax brakes, etc.) to cope with risk, “security threats”, violence, and war.<sup>636</sup>

A concrete example of this process and space is the development of the illegal colony of Modi'in Illit – one of the largest and poorest Israeli settlements in the West Bank – near the

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<sup>631</sup> Selmeczi, “... We Are Being Left to Burn Because We Do Not Count’\*,” 532.

<sup>632</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007.

<sup>633</sup> Ettinger, “Throwing Blows in Beit Shemesh.”

<sup>634</sup> See Heller and Lyon, “Settlers’ Mosque-Burning Campaign Expands into Israel”; Gorenberg, “Israel’s Other Occupation.”

<sup>635</sup> Na’aman, “The Checkpoint.”

<sup>636</sup> B’Tselem, B’Tselem, “Encouragement of Migration to the Settlements.”



Palestinian town of Bil'in. The settlement was founded, not by Zionist zealots, but by private entrepreneurs such as Lev Leviev – “one of Israel’s most powerful businessmen and an owner of Africa Israel Investments” – Shaya Boymelgreen (American real-estate investor), Mordechai Yona (former head of the Contractors Association, who founded Heftsiba, a construction company that also built the illegal settlement of Matityahu-East).<sup>637</sup> Hence, contrary to the 70’s when Gush Emunim and other settler-zealots were the main drivers behind colonization of the POT, most settlements born in the late ‘90s were the result of an heterogeneous assemblage, linking real-estate developers and construction companies seeking to score quick profit off the land confiscation and government subsidies related to new housing with poor ultra-Orthodox families, often from the ex-USSR republics.<sup>638</sup>

Indeed, equally important for our discussion, are the persons inhabiting this type of settlement (Modi'in Illit accounts for a quarter of the settler population in the West Bank), which is mostly populated by poor and lower middle class Israeli families, young couples or large orthodox families with no other alternatives. Settlements like Modi'in Illit are indeed attractive to those citizens for they are highly subsidized by the government, and hence cater to real social needs of a growing Israeli disenfranchised population. For instance, in the settlement of Ariel, in 2007 one could buy a four bed-room home for \$200,000 while in Israel, for the same amount, one could only buy a two bed-room apartment in one of the poorest neighborhood of Tel Aviv such as Kyriat Shalom.

B'Tselem recently mapped out this apparatus, stating that

Most settlements in the West Bank are defined as national priority areas ([...]). Accordingly, the settlers and other Israeli citizens working or investing in the settlements are entitled to significant financial benefits. These benefits are provided by eight government ministries: the Ministry of Construction and Housing (reduction of price of the land and generous loans for the purchase of apartments, part of which is converted to a grant); the Israel Lands Administration (significant price reductions in leasing land); the Ministry of Education (Compulsory Education Law from Age Three, the long school day, extension of the school year, incentives for teachers, and subsidized transportation to school); the ministries of industry and trade, tourism, and agriculture (grants for investors,

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<sup>637</sup> Gadi Algazi. “Matrix in Bil'in: Colonial Capitalism in the Occupied Territories” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 525.

<sup>638</sup> Gadi Algazi. “Matrix in Bil'in: Colonial Capitalism in the Occupied Territories” in *ibid.*, 522.

development of infrastructure for industrial zones, indemnification for loss of income resulting from custom duties imposed by countries of the European Union); the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (incentives for social workers); and the Ministry of Finance (reductions in income tax for individuals and companies).<sup>639</sup>

The money is directed and funneled according to a very simple logic of danger; “the more settlers were willing to undertake personal hardship and danger, the further they were from Israeli employment centre, the higher the government subsidy”.<sup>640</sup> Paraphrasing Foucault, we could say this governmentality achieves economic growth by according everyone a space within which she/he can take the ‘freedom’ to confront risks.<sup>641</sup>

Colonies in the POT are thus – along their function of grabbing natural resources and playing key defensive roles – mostly serving as “subsidized dormitories”<sup>642</sup> and constituting spaces of “graduated sovereignty”.<sup>643</sup> Neoliberal reason “does not use the national territory as the overriding frame of reference for political decisions” for it stresses that economic borderlessness creating multiple political spaces and techniques for differentiated governance within and outside the national territory, thus inducing graduated effects producing graduated levels of sovereignty and citizenship.<sup>644</sup> The settlements and “industrial zones” in the POT are cases in point.

Taking the example of the Modi’in Illit once more, we can explore how this “graduated sovereignty” produce various effects for the market, prices, and the neoliberal economy. Thanks to its proximity to first-world economy, government subsidies, and its poor ultra-orthodox population, Modi’in Illit has attracted a great number of high-tech companies – such as Imagestore and Matrix – which want to avoid offshoring their production to India for instance. Matrix’s website announces to clients that they will get “the quality, performance and

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<sup>639</sup> B’Tselem, “Encouragement of Migration to the Settlements.”

<sup>640</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007, 125.

<sup>641</sup> Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 144.

<sup>642</sup> Leila Farsakh. From Domination to Destruction: The Palestinian Economy under the Israeli Occupation" in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 386.

<sup>643</sup> Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*, 77.; In 2000, less than 48% of the settlers actually worked in the settlements. See Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, “Labour Force Survey, 2000-2001”; in 2009 and 2010 it had gone up to 84% and 86% respectively. Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, “Labour Force Survey, 2009-2010.”

<sup>644</sup> Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*, 76–77.

professionalism of a modern, Western country, at third world prices.”<sup>645</sup> Mordechai Gutman, Matrix’s CEO, explains that “because the religious population competing for the jobs faces relatively low living costs, Matrix is able to provide its local offshore outsourcing services to customers at prices similar to those in Far East countries...”<sup>646</sup> Matrix can do so because its wages are subsidized by the government for at least five years, and the constant proliferation of violence and security issues puts to its disposal stolen land and public resources such as security forces (IDF and policemen) as well as a docile and captive workforce mostly composed of orthodox women catering for their large families at salaries that represent 30 percent of the salary for the same job in Israel proper.<sup>647</sup> Other Israeli companies – such as Soda Stream up to very recently – rely on the Palestinian captive cheap-labor force.

### **Necropolitical Spaces and War Machines**

What then would be the role of the war-machine in a diagram of power that seeks to facilitate the extraction of resources at the lowest socio-political and economic cost and to keep policing the body politic? What is the relationship between the security dispositif of the state and a war-machine exceeding the state order? No matter how complex and variable, what can be said here is that the state’s security practices tend to territorialize or “capture” a war machine in a way as to benefit from its positive effects on the economy, for instance, stabilization of prices or growth, natural resources extraction, land confiscation, quick profits opportunities, and the policing of the “abject”.

As mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, war-machines thrive out of the exploitation of natural resources – be they diamonds, minerals, water, or territory (real-estate) – and they are connected with transnational networks that ignore territorial sovereignty. Similarly, Achille Mbembe pointed out that one of the dominant feature of the neoliberal age is that the right to kill and military operations are no longer under state monopoly and military manpower can be found

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<sup>645</sup> As quoted in Gadi Algazi. “Matrix in Bil’in: Colonial Capitalism in the Occupied Territories” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 527.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 528.

on the market obeying laws of offer and demand.<sup>648</sup> In fact, an increasing number of militias, security firms, and mercenaries are implicated in regional economies of violence with or without the sponsorship of a nation-state. It is my contention that the groups of settlers – such as the one that attacked the IDF base – can be better understood as war machines of this kind.<sup>649</sup>

The settlers' attacks on IDF bases reflect an already established neoliberal trend that increasingly reveals a loss of control over life by particular agencies of government to private enterprises and war machines. Letting the latter fill the space of state abandonment, the agencies intervene sparingly to produce an acceptable level of security without totally eliminating threats. The former objective being too costly and practically impossible, they must instead constantly adjust the policy in order to score the right balance between expenses and risks/danger. War-machines thus play a crucial role within the security-expanses dynamic equilibrium and thrive on the presence of danger, violence and presence/absence of state enforcement.

For the settler war machine, war and violence becomes a way of participating in a neoliberal world economy. As entrepreneurs, they thrive on insecurity, danger and violence. Less restrained by frontiers and codes than regular state militaries and having a lesser impact on Israel's diplomatic relations, the settler war-machine increasingly draws funds from the capital of sympathy of pro-Zionist organizations and individual ultra-rich donors, the American pro-Israel lobby, conservative religious congregations (Evangelical Christians), real estate developers, agricultural, construction, and high-tech companies and even a small number of Palestinian businessmen amongst others.<sup>650</sup>

The role NGOs play, U.S. organizations registered as "charities", and UN agencies (such as UNRWA), and local charities should not be neglected in this economy of violence. There is an increasing participation of international organizations in what constitute the state of Israel, as those organizations have allowed Palestinians to benefit from basic life services denied to them

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<sup>648</sup> Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 31–32; See also Hoffman, *The War Machines*.

<sup>649</sup> Altman, "Settlers Raid IDF Base, Injure Commander - Israel News, Ynetnews."

<sup>650</sup> Dana, Tariq, "Palestine's Capitalists."

by the Israeli occupier.<sup>651</sup> Indeed, they also have become a central piece in the diagram of power in the OT<sup>652</sup> by providing food, water and other basic needs (education, sanitary services, etc.) to Palestinian. Not only does the latter represent a “demographic threat” in the eyes of the Israeli state, but it also represents large expenses and high political cost. Hence, the occupation becomes sustainable, partly thanks to the presence of the international community which takes care of the Palestinians, but also thanks to the role the dynamic equilibrium managed by the Civil Administration giving up its caring function.<sup>653</sup> We should then add a caveat to Foucault’s theorization of biopolitics and say that neoliberalism transcends the latter – beyond biopolitics and into necropolitics. Moreover, in terms of sheer economics, the Israeli economist Shir Hever recently estimated that donors from the international community funding the Palestinians under occupation (\$2bn per year) “could be directly subsidising up to a third of the occupation’s costs.”<sup>654</sup> Always according to Hever, it is estimated “that at least 72% of international aid ends up in the Israeli economy.”<sup>655</sup> Hence, violence and destruction still attracts investment in the Israeli neoliberal economy.

The settler war-machine is thus a thoroughly heterogeneous assemblage. Indeed, the concept of war machine is particularly useful because it allows to map complex assemblages of forces and entities, state actors or not, that merge and split depending on events, interests, and spatial variables. We can thus easily imagine a young, secular, poor Israeli couple forced to move to a settlement for economic reasons banding with corrupt state officials, radical religiously motivated settlers and a IDF soldiers to ‘defend’ a settlement, then disbanding and even confronting one another when it comes to other events, or interests.

### **Settler War Machine and Sovereignty**

The state and the war machine are thus benefiting from their relationship with one another. Needless to say, this process is messy and unpredictable, for the war-machine does not respect

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<sup>651</sup> Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*.

<sup>652</sup> Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir. “The Order of Violence” in Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi, *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, 136.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 118.

<sup>654</sup> Cook, Jonathan. “Aid Subversion Report Makes for Shocking Reading | The National.”

<sup>655</sup> Hever, “How Much International Aid to Palestinians Ends Up in the Israeli Economy?,” 1.

established boundaries and conventions. To be more precise, we could talk of a resonance between the state and the war machine. It is thus not so much a question of which ‘utilizes’ or ‘uses’ which more than a reciprocal and co-dependent relationship. Nevertheless, this relationship has concrete effects for understanding Israeli politics and the politics of violence and occupation. In fact, these processes actually *produce* what we traditionally understand as “the state” or “sovereignty” in this case. The latter is actually what emerges from this complex set of interests, forces, discourses, relationships and struggles. In this complex economy of violence, the presence of threats and violence becomes a condition of possibility for the construction and the upkeep of settlements in the West Bank as well. The settler war machine, composed of its various heterogeneous elements, thus has an interest in inciting and multiplying acts of violence in this economy.

The settler war-machine benefits from the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) training, equipment, and military level intelligence as well as state subsidies and the support of private entrepreneurs looking to score quick profits. As the inquiry on the recent PTA unfolds, it is clear that IDF military personnel and members of the Knesset provided strategic information to the settlers who have attacked an IDF base.<sup>656</sup> The settlers adopted a ‘bring it on’ tone which Israeli commentators described as echoing ‘civil war’, a theme not so foreign to public debates in the country but nonetheless remarkable.<sup>657</sup> On the opposite side, a fringe of the Israeli army belonging to the secular Ashkenazim elite is getting quite irritated by the settlers. To the point that now former General Uri Saguy, in an Op-Ed in the Israeli daily *Ynet*, revealed that “I fear these domestic [settlers] threats more than I fear the Iranian threat” and that that the government should literally provoke the settlers into a violent confrontation so the IDF could shoot the “Jewish terrorists.”<sup>658</sup> We have here the expression of the effect the colonization of the state by the settler war machine.

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<sup>656</sup> Glickman, Aviad. “‘Soldiers Supplied Intel to Rightist Rioters’”; Robbins, Annie. “‘Day of Reckoning’ Settlers Who Attacked IDF Base Have Friends in Gov’t.”

<sup>657</sup> It is important to note that this leaking of information was not treated the same way – considered treason – as would have been a leaking to a Palestinian entity such as Hamas.

<sup>658</sup> Saguy, Uri. “Shoot the Jewish Terrorists”; Deger, Allison. “Former Israeli General.”

Here, enmity matters little, and it is very possible that Israeli-Jews attack other Israeli-Jews. As the state “territorializes” the war-machines, the latter works from the “inside”, changing and producing what we understand by “Israeli State”, challenging an already established *rapport de forces* (in this case secular Ashkenazim domination) and causing anxieties of all sorts over the Israeli identity, democratic and Jewish character of the state. According to an Israeli daily for instance, fear over the possibility of mutiny within the IDF looms large.<sup>659</sup> Another concrete example of this new era is the increasing number of attacks by settlers and groups associated with them within Israel ‘proper’, especially against Israeli-Palestinian, non-Jewish, citizens.<sup>660</sup>

As such, what is new is how this war machine now has declared war on different ways of being Jewish or Israeli. It is in fact the capacity of war machines to cross all those traditional boundaries that creates a new situation, which many have come to call “war”. The tactics of the settlers, and the settlers themselves, are increasingly coming back in Israel proper, thus effecting new forms or processes of statization (*processus d’étatisation*).<sup>661</sup>

An Israeli discussing with an ultra-Orthodox *yeshiva* student implicated in the colonies in the POT reported

“Clearly, there is a war here sometimes even worse than the one in Samaria [West Bank],” the yeshiva student said. [...] The war he described was another front in the struggle he knew from growing up in a settlement in the northern West Bank, or Samaria. [...] The explicit reason that his yeshiva had been established in Acre was to serve as bridgehead in that struggle just as West Bank settlement are built to bolster Jewish hold on land there. [...] the conflict is coming home. The words ‘price-tag’ spray-painted in Hebrew on the wall of a burned mosque inside Israel’s 1967 borders transformed Israel’s Arab citizens into targets and tore at the all-too-delicate fabric of a shared democracy. [...] The agents of this change include veterans of the West Bank settlement seeking to establish a presence in shared Jewish-Arab cities in Israel and politicians backing a wave of legislation intended to reduce the right of Arab citizens. [...] Now, the attitudes and methods of West Bank

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<sup>659</sup> Sherwood, “Mutiny Fear in Israeli Army as Religious Zionists Gain Influence”; Levinson, Chaim. “IDF Troops Hang Sign at Base”; See for instance the recently flyer distributed to IDF soldiers calling for “refusal of orders” in Cohen, Gili., “IDF Demands Probe Into Group Calling for ‘Price Tag’ Attacks - Diplomacy & Defense - Haaretz.”

<sup>660</sup> See for instance the recently flyer distributed to IDF soldiers calling for “refusal of orders,” <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/idf-demands-probe-into-group-calling-for-price-tag-attacks.premium-1.494460>

<sup>661</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, 1988.

settlements are inevitably leaking back across a border that Israel does not even show on its maps.<sup>662</sup>

Ignoring frontiers and revealing the complex border politics the settler war machine has thus marked a return within Israel. In the Arab neighborhoods deserted by the Israeli-Jews, groups of settlers coming from the OT apply the tactics learnt outside the 'official' boundaries of the state. Burning mosques, attacking Israeli-Palestinians citizens and making their life unlivable, they thrive on their Jewish status (qualified life) in order to bring state resources through processes of securitization in disenfranchised zones within Israel 'proper'.

### **Gaza and Diversification, or When Colonization and Occupation Gets Too Expansive, Try Destruction**

Natural resources are also part of the equation of Israel's occupation of Gaza. Here natural resources can be translated in two words: natural gas.<sup>663</sup> As Laleh Khalili pointed out, Israel "also limits Gazan access to the sea and importantly to the maritime gas deposits, by shrinking Palestinian maritime access from 20 to 3 nautical miles, shortly after gas deposits were discovered at 18 nautical miles offshore. Again, Israeli military and economic agendas seem to converge."<sup>664</sup> Yet, what is striking about Gaza is another profit making industry.

Gaza is probably the only location in the Occupied Territories where colonization and settlement upkeep and security was more expansive than the benefits various investors could draw from it. The disengagement in 2005 was the result of the calculation that Gaza's settlements were the most expansive per/capita than any other settlement in the Occupied Territories.<sup>665</sup> The proximity of the Israeli-Jewish settlers (especially in Gush Katif) with densely populated Palestinian urban areas (especially Khan Younis) put the security of the settlers and

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<sup>662</sup> Gorenberg, "Israel's Other Occupation."

<sup>663</sup> Antreasyan, "Gas Finds in the Eastern Mediterranean."

<sup>664</sup> Khalili, Laleh. "A Habit of Destruction."

<sup>665</sup> "From 2000 to 2005, Gaza contained less than 1 percent of the Jewish population of Israel-Palestine but accounted for approximately 10 percent of Israeli intifada-related fatalities (and more than 40 percent of all Israeli combatant deaths)." in Li, Darryl. "Disengagement and the Frontiers of Zionism | Middle East Research and Information Project."



the soldiers guarding them at risk daily, and the government seemed increasingly reluctant to pay the political price for a very small minority of settlers.

As many have pointed out, however, disengagement did not mean the end of occupation.<sup>666</sup> The terrestrial, naval, and air blockade that replaced the settlements brought into being another neoliberal dynamic where violence can be exploited for productive ends. Here, creativity and R&D are what this economy of violence is about. In sum, Gaza literally became, all at once, the laboratory for Israel's weapons industry, its test ground, and one of its most prized and cherished marketing strategy.<sup>667</sup> However, this economy – because of reality of the West Bank's occupation and Gaza's new settler-less reality – was to be radically different from the one in the West Bank where the so-called "crowd control" and "non-lethal weapons" industry has made its mark.<sup>668</sup> In other words, Gaza was to bring diversification in the (re)production of Israel's "security related experience".<sup>669</sup> Indeed, part of the conclusion drawn by Neve Gordon's study on the political economy of the Israeli homeland security is that "since experience increases the exchange value of the product it is only logical to sustain and even augment and diversify the process and structures that create the experience."<sup>670</sup> Gaza has become one site for working on diversification of the economy of violence.

In fact, in the past decade, there barely was a year without an Israeli military intervention in Gaza. As these operations become a "mowing the lawn" akin to "periodic maintenance"<sup>671</sup> routine – as Yoav Galant, the IDF command heading the Southern Command, once noted – they also become occasion for current officers, but also former IDF officer now holding important

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<sup>666</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007; Khalili, Laleh. "A Habit of Destruction."

<sup>667</sup> Becker, Markus. "Factory and Lab"; Ilani, Ofri and Ofer Neiman. "'Wars on Gaza Have Become Part of Israel's System of Governance'" See also Yotam Feldman's film "The Lab".

<sup>668</sup> See Who Profits? report Who Profits, "Proven Effective: Crowd Control Weapons in the Occupied Palestinian Territories."

<sup>669</sup> Neve Gordon writes that an "analysis of the political economy of Israel's homeland security industry accordingly reveals that there is an economic motivation to produce and reproduce the so-called security related experiences and to diversify them." Gordon, "The Political Economy of Israel's Homeland Security," 4, 49.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>671</sup> Ilani, Ofri and Ofer Neiman. "'Wars on Gaza Have Become Part of Israel's System of Governance'."

positions within Israeli private arms industry, to test newly developed weaponry in an “operational” setting. For the former, testing weapons in a real “operational” setting allows for making sure weapons fulfill the mission they were acquired for in the first place in a relatively controlled environment. For the latter, the use of these weapons on Palestinians (in large part civilians) becomes an effective tool for marketing their product and boosting sells (and hence their shares) of the company they own and/or work for. Once tested in “the field”, the weapons acquire the “proven combat performance”, “proven effective” and/or “recommended” labels.<sup>672</sup> The latter becomes a fabulous marketing tool for the company fabricating the weapon. In an interview with the German daily *Spiegel*, Dan Peled, a business professor at the University of Haifa, noted that “‘Proven combat performance’ is still one of Israel's strongest military technology sales promotions,” before adding that “The label ‘combat proven’ translates directly into healthy global sales of firearms, drones and rockets ‘Made in Israel’.”<sup>673</sup> Former Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Industry Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, when asked by Israeli journalist Yotam Feldman if the fact that Israeli weapons were thoroughly tested in “real time” combat generated profits, he admitted that “it brings billions of dollars.”<sup>674</sup>

One concrete example is Israel Weapons Industry (IWI), the now privately owned former small arms section of the Israeli government owned company Israel Military Industry (IMI). As the Marketing Director of IWI, Gil Wainman, explained to the *Spiegel*, the IDF is one of its most important customers. Not only because of the quantity it orders from IWI, but because when a new weapon is developed, “it is given to the military just as soon as the internal testing phase is complete so that it can be tried out on the battlefield. Soldiers then report back to IWI's technicians in order to help them improve the weapons. Wainman explained that IWI has “vast experience [...] Real combat experience. And we are using it in our development effort.”<sup>675</sup> In short, Gaza is IWI's lab for testing and developing its products.

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<sup>672</sup> Who Profits, “Proven Effective: Crowd Control Weapons in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” 8, 22.

<sup>673</sup> Becker, Markus. “Factory and Lab.”

<sup>674</sup> Feldman, *The Lab*.

<sup>675</sup> As quoted in Becker, Markus. “Factory and Lab.”

Other Israeli companies profiting from this economy of violence in Gaza include Elbit Systems, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems (Rafael). The former is privately owned while the Israeli government owns the two others. Indeed, as the Israeli investigative journalist Yotam Feldman revealed,

the operational testing in Gaza of Elbit's BMS (Battle Management System – a special internet-like system for ground forces), a huge project worth \$1 billion, has allowed Elbit to raise its price in a deal signed a year later [Operation Cast Lead] with Australia. The same goes for Rafael. The company stated openly that it would capitalize on the escalation that preceded operation Pillar of Defense – with the first operational use of Iron Dome – to raise around half a billion shekels (roughly \$135 million) through the issuance of bonds. A salesman for the IAI told me that assassinations and operations in Gaza bring about an increase of tens of percentage points in company sales.<sup>676</sup> No doubt, bombing Gazans literally became a marketing technique.

Hence, between 2001 and 2012, Israeli weapons exports more than doubled. The end result is that, for the year 2012 for instance, Israel exported \$2.4 billion in military equipment. An amount that places Israel as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest arms exporter, ranking right after the U.N. P5. However, with a “per capita value of around \$300 in exports for each resident, Israel is at the top of the list,”<sup>677</sup> and very far ahead. Indeed, Israel is now the only country with a weapon industry selling more abroad than in the local market.

One industry that has been largely profiting from the last decade's Gaza military operations is the drone (terrestrial or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)) industry. It was reported “that Israel sold more unmanned flying systems than the US in 2013. It is estimated that it will export twice as many as the US in 2014.”<sup>678</sup> Indeed, as Neve Gordon pointed out in 2009, “of all UAV systems transferred internationally between 2001 and 2005, 68 percent were Israeli-supplied.”<sup>679</sup> Apart from the UAV industry, the Israeli company Guardium, building the G-Nius, a terrestrial drone remotely controlled patrolling the Israel-Gaza border. Another Israeli companies profiting from the current situation in Gaza is Magal (physical security (walls and CCTV)). All of them count on the “combat proven” label to foam their sells.

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<sup>676</sup> Yotam Feldman in Ilani, Ofri and Ofer Neiman. “‘Wars on Gaza Have Become Part of Israel's System of Governance’.”

<sup>677</sup> Becker, Markus. “Factory and Lab.”

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

<sup>679</sup> Gordon, “The Political Economy of Israel's Homeland Security,” 9.

Mowing the Gaza lawn is not only an opportunity for testing new lawnmower blades (weapons and systems). War also provides an opportunity for IDF soldiers and officers to experience combat. In a society where having experienced combat is a source of legitimacy, cultural and symbolic capital (see Chapter 3 on how one out of two Israeli women having recourse to sperm banks demanded that the donor had some “combat” experience) wars and military operations can become fast-track elevators for climbing the “social ladder”.<sup>680</sup> It is especially the case for Mizrahim who are often discriminated against by an Ashkenazi elite.<sup>681</sup> Officers use military campaigns under their command has political capital to rise within the military institutions and eventually the political institution.<sup>682</sup> The case of Ariel Sharon is one example amongst many others. In any case, for these officers, be it Israeli military or political institutions, the prospect of scoring a lucrative position in one of Israel’s weapons and security industry only get higher.<sup>683</sup>

For the lower-ranks officers and Israeli soldiers, having combat experience becomes an opportunity to participate in the ever-growing global security industry as security advisers, trainers, and analysts. Indeed, as Yotam Feldman pointed out in an interview, “Today Israel offers an entire political model for asymmetric warfare, a conflict between a state and irregular combatants.”<sup>684</sup> This knowledge becomes useful for security and police forces left to deal with neoliberalism’s human “externalities” in the favelas, shantytowns, and slums of this world. This is what Neve Gordon, in his study of the political economy of homeland security, has called “experience economy of Israeli homeland security”.<sup>685</sup> Israeli companies such as Global CST have become leaders in this field of expertise. In short, former IDF combat soldiers are at the forefront of the Private Military Contractors (PMCs) booming global industry, and by taking the leader position, they are literally making the Israeli/Palestine model that other countries and

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<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 29.; Cf. Breznitz, “Collaborative Public Space in a National Innovation System.”

<sup>682</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2012.

<sup>683</sup> Yacobi, *Israel and Africa*, 116; Ynet, “Study: 220 Israeli Firms Export Arms - Israel Business, Ynetnews.”

<sup>684</sup> Yotam Feldman in Ilani, Ofri and Ofer Neiman. “‘Wars on Gaza Have Become Part of Israel’s System of Governance’.”

<sup>685</sup> Gordon, “The Political Economy of Israel’s Homeland Security,” 3.

institutions will emulate. The economy of violence discussed above – i.e. striking the homeostatic balance of intervention/abandonment – is here again at the center of the success of this model:

Mena Bacharach, Homeland Security Business Development and Marketing Manager of RAFAEL Armament Development Authority, claims that “No other country has Israel’s fundamental competitive advantage [sic passim] in Homeland Security of enduring the day-today effect of terror. As a result the country has a deep reservoir of experienced professionals, with a hands-on background in the security forces, and real-time expertise in developing concepts, products, solutions and systems that combat terror.” “Too often when consulted by worldwide authorities,” Bacharach continues, “we can see either inadequate security on the one hand, or overkill on the other hand. Getting it just right is an art that we in Israel have had to master through grim experience”.<sup>686</sup>

Moreover, in Gaza destruction becomes lucrative not only because Israeli weapons and security systems are key to its deployment, but also because after destruction comes reconstruction. Given the blockade on Gaza, all construction materials entering Gaza legally (that is, not through Gaza-Egypt border tunnels) is provided by Israeli companies and distributors. Given the post Pillar of Defense (2014 Gaza war) U.N. estimate of reconstruction cost at more than \$7 billion,<sup>687</sup> the possibility for Israeli construction materials providers is almost endless. The example of Nesher, Israel’s sole cement producer is a case in point. As the Israeli NGO *Who Profits?* reports that Nesher “sells more than 85% of all cement in Israel [and that the] West Bank and the Gaza strip constitute a captive market [...] and a source of large-scale revenues.” *Who Profits?* also notes that

With regards to the reconstruction industry in the Gaza Strip, Nesher has been reaping enormous profit under the framework of the UN-sponsored agreement. As it is the sole Israeli cement provider, and holds a monopoly over the Israeli market, it has secured economic gains and corporate growth through its exploitation of the ruins of Palestinian homes from the last Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip. In recent months, Nesher Cement was seen through the Gaza Strip in massive quantities.<sup>688</sup>

As Laleh Khalili has argued, the destruction of civilian infrastructures – such as water treatment plants, electricity power plants and even hospitals – is not only the result of the application of the military “Dahiya doctrine”. Destroying civilian infrastructures that *must* be rebuilt if life is to be sustained means that by controlling all means and path to reconstruction and by destroying, say,

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<sup>686</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>687</sup> BBC News, “UN Brokers Agreement to Rebuild in Gaza Strip.”

<sup>688</sup> Who Profits, “Reconstruction of Gaza: Zero Buildings, Massive Profit.”

independently working power and treatment plants, Israeli officials know that the newly built electrical grid or sewage system will inevitably be controlled by Israeli officials and companies.<sup>689</sup> Such is already the case for the phone lines in Gaza. The latter constitute a remarkable asset and tool for Israeli intelligence agencies allowing easy intelligence gathering/spying but also allowing the IDF to deploy its lawfare strategies more effectively.<sup>690</sup>

As war against Gazans become a routine and an asset in Israel's economy of violence, it has also become "inherent to the Israeli political system", part of Israel's neoliberal system of government.<sup>691</sup> Two trends define and underline the neoliberal aspect of this governmentality. First, there is a strong privatization current that has taken hold since the early 2000s. Previously publicly owned Israeli military or security companies making huge profits from Israel's wars on Gaza are being privatized. And those reaping the profits are now composing a small cast of individuals, who, in good part, come from the Ashkenazi military establishment.<sup>692</sup> There is the case of IMI and IWI, and now IAI – Israel's largest drone manufacturer and designer – is on the eve of a IPO for four billion NIS (more than one billion \$US). Second, this economy of violence is in large part reliant on the Israeli government *active* intervention (contrary to *laissez-faire*) in stemming the so-called "peace process", encouraging colonization and settler violence, and deciding to go to war every two year or so in Gaza. In other words, war becomes a way for the government to act on the "social environment", diversify its opportunities, so as to manage an effective and lucrative economy of violence.

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<sup>689</sup> Khalili, Laleh. "A Habit of Destruction."

<sup>690</sup> Weizman, "Short Cuts."

<sup>691</sup> Yotam Feldman in Ilani, Ofri and Ofer Neiman. "'Wars on Gaza Have Become Part of Israel's System of Governance'."

<sup>692</sup> As Yotam Feldman noted in an interview, "the military industries are responsible for the transfer of public funds to an upper-middle class which makes its living from these industries, directly or indirectly. Some of this money ends up back in state coffers through taxes and revenues for government arms makers, thereby contributing to a conflict state economy, and some of the money remains in private hands." in *ibid*.

## Conclusion: Neoliberalism, Violence, Space

Amongst the theoretical implications that can be drawn from this reflection, is a new way of conceptualizing the relationship between society, the state, and violence in the context of neoliberalism. Needless to say, our common understanding of sovereignty loses its theoretical foothold for we could say that along the spectrum of spaces of citizenship and sovereignty, the level of violence and (in)security also follow a similar pattern of spectralization. Here we are forced to abandon the clear distinction between “inside” and “outside” and should talk about a spectrum of violence and (in)security, where it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate between war and politics, and between law-enforcement violence (police operations) and warring violence. Accordingly, death becomes less and less spectacular. A few hundred or few thousand dead bodies in a single Israeli military operation in Gaza would most probably be dwarfed by the number of deaths related to occupation policies (be it lack of food, medicine, proper healthcare access, water sanitation, sewage infrastructure deficiency or absence, endemic psychological distress related to the violence of occupation, and endemic unemployment amongst other factors).

That means thinking in terms of the distribution and variable intensities of violence rather than accept the simple debates about the absence or presence of war. No doubts, this is a radically different understanding of the political as presented liberal institutionalism. Instead we could think of institutionalization as the internalization of warlike relations where violence (at various degrees and intensities) is less the exception than the norm.<sup>693</sup> The disciplining and control of bodies and subjects is thus the effect of a particular arrangement of power that is itself the result of warlike relations in the body politic.<sup>694</sup> The process of racialization described in previous chapters of this thesis as the distribution of difference through politics as war by other means thus takes its full meaning.

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<sup>693</sup> On war as an internal institution of civil order see Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 159–160.

<sup>694</sup> Thus, the warlike relations are by no way exclusive to the Israeli-Jewish vs. Palestinians dynamic. Take for instance the case of the Ultra-Orthodox community in Beit Shemesh, living in “neighborhoods where the extremists live are like ”Arab villages“ that police are afraid to enter.” Ettinger, “Throwing Blows in Beit Shemesh.”

In the case of Israel and the OT, Eyal Weizman points out that “The logic of partition of the Occupied Territories has always swung between selective presence and absence, addressing two contradictory Israeli strategies: territorial (attempting to annex as much empty land as possible); and demographic (excluding the areas heavily populated by Palestinians).”<sup>695</sup> He then pursues,

Governments gradually learned to benefit from the settlement chaos; indeed, they sometimes promoted or even agitated it, creating the atmosphere that allows certain crimes to take place. [...] Actual or claimed loss of control in the Occupied Territories thus itself became an effective government strategy. The appearance of being out of control allowed the state to achieve its ideological objectives without accepting responsibility for them.<sup>696</sup>

An apparent governmental loss of control in the legitimate use of violence and sovereignty may very well in fact mean the outsourcing of violence to achieve desired effects without the undesired externalities.<sup>697</sup> The art of not governing becomes the art of governing, that is, in this neoliberal logic, the state thrives out of its retreat. Even more importantly, it also serves an economic purpose. As a matter of fact, the Israeli administrators have proven to be exceptional neoliberal administrators, managing to deny social services to a population under their control (and legal responsibility), while exploiting the economic potential of the land belonging to this population. Palestinian’s natural resources are exploited while the Palestinian economy is kept – through various security and warring measures (active intervention on the social) – from competing with Israeli businesses.<sup>698</sup> Palestinians appear to have no rights except the one of being part Israeli companies’ consumer pool.<sup>699</sup>

Therefore, we cannot understand the violence in the occupied territories apart from neoliberalism’s expressions (such as the J14 movement, its protest and claims), the policing of the Israeli body politic, and the violent events between settlers and the IDF in the POT. We can ask if those events are not, in fact, tied together through a neoliberal logic? For, the demand for lower rent prices in Israel major urban centers and the limited scope of the organizers of the J14

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<sup>695</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 2007, 94.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid., 94–95.

<sup>697</sup> Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, chap. 7 especially.

<sup>698</sup> Avenue, York, and 1.212.290.4700, “Occupation, Inc.,” 7.

<sup>699</sup> Hass, Amira. “The Real Cost of Israel’s Occupation of the Palestinians”; “Who Profits? – an Israeli organisation monitoring the economic benefits for Israel in the occupation – recently assessed that dairy firm Tnuva enjoys a monopoly in the West Bank worth \$60 million annually.” in Cook, Jonathan. “Aid Subversion Report Makes for Shocking Reading | The National.”



movement are intimately linked to the situation of the settlers and the securitization of daily life in the O.T. As the settlers make “new prudential” entrepreneurs of themselves, placing themselves in risks and harm’s way, the prices of housing in the OT and Israeli “Arab neighborhoods” get considerably cheaper thanks to the militarization and presence of danger and violence in everyday life. Could violence become a way to stabilize prices and respond to social demands while continuing the occupation and reducing its political (“diplomatic fallout”<sup>700</sup>) and economical costs? Heeding on relatively recent literature on the Israeli occupation and violence, this chapter, drawing on Foucault’s theorization of neoliberalism and biopolitics as well as Mbembe’s addendum to the latter – through the concept of necropolitics – argued so.<sup>701</sup>

The concept of necropolitical spaces is central, for it highlights how abandonment and violence are far from being the result of “failed states” or loss of sovereignty. Rather, they appear to be a totally different mode of organization of distributing violence, law and order. They represent neither chaos nor failure, but a neoliberal organizational type introducing difference and inequality in a global capitalist system that thrives on them. As stated above, one of the dominant feature of the neoliberal age is that the right to kill and military operations are no longer under state monopoly and military manpower can be found on the market obeying laws of offer and demand.<sup>702</sup> An increasing number of militias, security firms, and mercenaries are implicated in regional economies of violence without the sponsorship or contract of a nation-state. Recent developments in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, West Africa, Afghanistan, and Israel-Palestine all point in this direction.

We could say that we assist to a new organization of space and population that blurs the enemy/friend relationship. Identities become fluid and fungible. For war becomes a way of participating in neoliberal world economy. What holds things together in this economy of violence is no longer kinship or nationality, but a Capitalist axiomatic. In that sense, Palestine is

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<sup>700</sup> Yaakov Katz, “Security and Defense: Challenging Times - Features.”

<sup>701</sup> Mbembe’s role in this exploration is non-negligible and is, in fact, a crucial and necessary part of the puzzle I am trying to put together. To be more precise, what Mbembe helps us do here is to get rid of Foucault’s normative understanding or dichotomous order/disorder logic of sovereignty in the context of biopolitical governmentality, and provides a way of thinking violence in the OT along with capitalism in different ways.

<sup>702</sup> Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 31–32.

far from being a failed state. It is exactly as Israel planned it to be. Those states are the most advance and most radical neoliberal states, creating spaces that are extremely productive for resource extraction, without providing any services or social policy to a population that has been relegated to the status of “living dead”. Thus, in this neoliberal economy, the reason of state is to let people kill each other in a way that resources can be extracted. And in such context, violence becomes an occasion to invent; that is, it is the most creative relationships to violence that will differentiate those who die from those who live.

Violence should thus be understood as productive and as a resource/technology working in conjunction with other incentives to influence the market. That is, war and violence are technologies producing and introducing difference, different spaces of citizenship and introduce inequalities, thus participating in economic growth and/or price stabilization. Under neoliberal governmentality, necropolitical spaces trades in violence and thrive on “disorder”.

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